ISRAEL/DOCUMENTS OCTOBER 1956-MARCH 1957 COMPANION VOLUME 12

STATE OF ISRAEL

DOCUMENTS ON THE FOREIGN POLICY OF ISRAEL

THE SINAI CAMPAIGN: THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE
OCTOBER 1956 – MARCH 1957

COMPANION VOLUME

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ISRAEL STATE ARCHIVES

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THE SINAI CAMPAIGN: THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE
OCTOBER 1956 – MARCH 1957

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COMPANION VOLUME

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FOREWORD

The present volume is the twelfth in the series of volumes of documents relating to the foreign policy of Israel. This volume differs from previous volumes in the series in that it is devoted to two central subjects: a description of the political and diplomatic struggle waged by Israel during and after the Sinai Campaign, until the final withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Sinai peninsula and the Gaza Strip, and of the political and military results of the war. The period covered is from the outbreak of war on 29 October 1956 until 31 March 1957.

This volume, the English companion volume, consists of English summaries of the Hebrew documents and a full translation of the list of documents, introduction, editorial notes, footnotes and indexes to the Main Volume. Because of the nature of the diplomatic campaign, much of which was conducted in or with reference to the United States and at the U.N., many of the key documents appear in the Main Volume in English.

The documents appearing in this volume, as in previous ones, are merely a limited selection of the many thousands of documents dealing with Israel's foreign relations and security in connection with the Sinai Campaign. It does not include military documentation on the events of the campaign, or documents dealing with domestic affairs, political and economic issues, unless these matters had a bearing on foreign and security affairs. Strict criteria had to be applied also when making the selection of documents on foreign relations so as to remain within the framework of the volume. Thus only a small amount of documents on Israel's relations with Latin America, Eastern Europe and many other European states have been included. On the other hand, some subjects were documented almost in their entirety, such as the moves and developments in the U.N. Security Council and the General Assembly during and after the campaign, or Israel's relations with the Eisenhower Administration. The editors wish to stress that the whole process of selection and editing took place without the imposition of any restrictions or prohibitions of a personal or political nature, and with unlimited access to archival sources.

Most of the documents in the volume are from the files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs kept in the Israel State Archives. Some documents come from the files of the Prime Minister's Office in the Israel State Archives, the Israel Military and Defence Establishment Archives and the Ben-Gurion Archives. To prepare the introduction and notes the editors also made use of material in other record groups of the Israel State Archives and of material from the British National Archives. The stenographic records of government meetings were also at the editors' disposal.

Arrangement of the documents. The documents are arranged in chronological order. Telegrams were arranged according to the earliest known date, in most cases the date when the telegram was written. If this date was not known, the date of receipt was used. Reports of meetings and discussions were arranged according to

the date of writing the report, rather than the date when the meeting or discussion took place.

The text. The text printed in the Main Volume is that of the original document, except for the following editorial changes and emendations:

(a) Addresses of senders and addressees, as well as dates in their original form, have been deleted. In some reports, memoranda and minutes the original headings have also been omitted. These details have been incorporated in part in a standard format in the heading supplied by the editors (see below) or in a note. The lists of addressees to whom copies of the documents were sent have also been omitted, except in cases where the editors felt it was important to indicate the distribution of the document, when the information was included in a footnote.

(b) In some documents words or passages that are of no direct relevance to foreign policy or are of a personal nature have been omitted. All such omissions are explained in a note.

(c) Slips of the pen, typographical errors and misspellings have been corrected silently. In general, no further attempt has been made to correct style, syntax or grammar.

(d) Common abbreviations and abbreviations whose meaning is not in doubt have been expanded to full form. In cases of doubt the abbreviation appears in full form in square brackets. Abbreviations of proper names and place names have always been expanded to full form in square brackets. Abbreviations commonly pronounced as such and acronyms (e.g. U.N., U.S., IDF, NATO, etc.) have not been altered.

(e) Words missing in the original have been added, either conjecturally (within square brackets) or on the basis of a parallel text of the same document (in square brackets and with an explanatory note).

(f) Original punctuation and capitalisation, as well as British or American spelling, have been retained except in cases of obvious mistakes or to avoid misunderstandings. In telegrams, where the original punctuation is partial, the editors have exercised greater liberty in determining capitalisation and punctuation.

Editorial headings. The heading includes the names of the sender and the addressee, the file reference of the document, the origin and the destination, except when the addressee is the Foreign Ministry or another agency of the Government of Israel, and the date.

Editorial Notes. These provide information on important events or developments which are not found in the documents. They have been placed before the document mentioning the subject for the first time or the date of the event and numbered in sequence together with the documents.

The footnotes explain and expand subjects which are not clear in the text, give cross-references to other documents mentioned in the text or containing further

information and give references to additional literature. Biographical information has been given only when necessary for a proper understanding of the text. In other cases the biographical index, which gives basic information on most persons mentioned in the documents, should be consulted.

Indexes and list of documents. A list of documents and editorial notes, indicating their main subjects, appears at the beginning of the volume. Two indexes, one for persons, and one for topics and places, appear at the end of the volume. References in the index are to document numbers.

Chronology and map. At the beginning of this volume, after the list of documents, a chronological table of military and political events between 22 October 1956 and 31 March 1957 and a map of the Sinai Campaign have been added. The purpose of these additions is to clarify developments in the Sinai Campaign and the British-French attack on Suez (Operation Musketeer) and the political moves in Washington and the European capitals and at the U.N., which took place during and after the campaign. These events formed the background to the political and diplomatic struggle described in this volume.

We would like to thank all the individuals and institutions who helped in the preparation of this volume: Ambassador (retired) Daniel Mokadi, who read the manuscript and made many important comments; Mrs. Michal Zur, the director of the Israel Defence and Military Establishment Archives, and Mrs. Hannah Pinschau, the director of the Ben-Gurion Archives, for their assistance in locating additional documentation; the veteran staff of the Foreign Ministry, who are too numerous to mention by name, who advised the editors on their field of expertise; Ambassador (retired) Yoel Sher, for his generous assistance with material in French; the Government Printer and Printiv Press and their staff, for their dedicated and accurate work; Dr. Yair Glick and Nina Davis of the Quality Translations company and Rachel Yarden who translated the companion volume, Joan Hooper, who was responsible for proofreading it and all those who contributed to preparing and publishing this volume.

INTRODUCTION

This volume describes the political and diplomatic campaign waged by Israel to preserve as many as possible of the achievements of the Sinai Campaign. This campaign was carried on in several arenas: in the Security Council and in the General Assembly of the United Nations, in Washington, in the European capitals, in South America and among the members of the Afro-Asian bloc.

In addition the volume traces the development of Israel's foreign policy on this critical issue, as it took shape in various institutions and agencies: the government, the Knesset (Parliament), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and Israel's missions around the world. This process, secret for the most part, with only its outcome evident to the public, underwent a number of dramatic upheavals. Serious differences of opinion found expression in the sharp transition from David Ben-Gurion's victory speech to the decision on Israeli withdrawal and its implementation.

The political campaign began with the convening of the Security Council almost immediately after the fighting began. Its aims changed gradually over the following five months.Though the results of the political campaign were not as clear cut and unambiguous as those of the battles, which continued until 5 November and resulted in the destruction of the main strength of the Egyptian army and the IDF taking control of all of the Sinai peninsula except a 15 kilometre wide strip east of the Suez Canal (see Chronology, p. cxvii), they proved, in the long run, to be more enduring and solid. The political arena is thus the central subject of this volume. Alongside it various other subjects are discussed (which will not be presented in this introduction), such as the attempt to improve relations with the Vatican;[1] the repatriation of Polish Jews from the Soviet Union;[2] Israel's attempts to get a foothold in the conference of NATO ministers in Paris,[3] and more.

The secret Sèvres agreement,[4] signed on 24 October 1956 between France, Great Britain and Israel, sealed the close cooperation between the three countries in the planned attack on the Nasser regime in Egypt, which had nationalised the British-French owned Suez Canal in July 1956. The Sèvres agreement, which included Jordan's ally, Britain, and gave Israel a free hand against Jordan in case of Jordanian attack, neutralised Israel's fear of such an attack following the serious deterioration in security along their common border, as a result of Fedaiyun terror attacks and Israeli reprisal operations. Because of the complicated nature of the agreement — Israel had to provide the pretext for the British and French attack on Egypt by

1 See report by Maurice Fischer on his mission to the Vatican, no. 438.

2 See for example nos. 313, 445.

3 See Editorial Note no. 205.

4 See Vol. 11, preface, pp. 22–23; see also no. 500, *ibid.*

attacking it in Sinai — and because of the need for total secrecy, the campaign's true target — Egypt — could not be indicated until its actual onset. The massive call-up of reserves which began in Israel in late October for the purpose of the war against Egypt was perceived as preparation for military action against Jordan, and, in effect, a successful deception was achieved, one which was plausible because it was based on real elements in the relations between Israel and Jordan.[5]

The involvement of the United States (and particularly of President Dwight D. Eisenhower) in these developments began as early as mid-October, in the attempt to prevent the approaching war. The reserve call-up in late October, combined with Israel's policy of vagueness and opacity, aroused great concern in the United States that Israel was indeed about to attack Jordan. This concern impelled President Eisenhower to contact Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in a message transmitted via Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on 15 October,[6] and later in direct messages on 27 and 28 October, in order to dissuade him from creating a situation that would present Israel before the world as being in the wrong and would put the United States in a difficult position.[7]

In his messages to Ben-Gurion the American president was still addressing the tension between Israel and Jordan, showing that the United States had been convinced by Israel's deception. Right up to the actual outbreak of war the United States had no inkling of the dramatic upheaval which had taken place in the military and strategic situation in the Middle East following the Sèvres agreement.

But the United States was not the only one misled by the Israeli government's moves. Even their own Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was to carry the burden of the worldwide political campaign, was excluded and received no information until the actual fighting began. Except for the foreign minister, Golda Meir, most of the Ministry personnel knew nothing of the Sèvres agreement or of the true purpose of the call-up of reserves. However, Jacob Herzog, who was appointed special advisor to Ben-Gurion before the war, was involved in all decisions and developments. The Israeli ambassadors abroad — including Abba Eban, Eliahu Elath, Jacob Tsur and Yosef Avidar — visited Israel about a week before the campaign began for an ambassadors' conference in Jerusalem, but not a word was said to them about the imminent war.

After being repeatedly questioned by Dulles as to Israel's intentions, especially during the massive call-up, Eban once again asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

5 See Editorial Note no. 1.

6 See Vol. 11 no. 491; see also A. Eban: *The Political Battle in the U.N. and in the United States following the Sinai Campaign* [Hebrew] (below, *The Political Battle*), p. 5. This paper by Eban, in Hebrew, was never published and is available in the Israel State Archives in file 130.02/2458/18.

7 See nos. 2, 4.

for information,[8] but despite his entreaties received no further details. He only learned that the war had broken out while he was discussing Eisenhower's latest message to Ben-Gurion with William Rountree, the assistant to the Secretary of State, after the news had been received in the State Department.

Eban, as Israel's ambassador to the United States and permanent representative in the United Nations, bore the brunt of the reaction to Israel's decision to attack Egypt in conjunction with the two Western powers, France and Britain. ("Collusion" between these powers and Israel was widely suspected but officially denied.) Eban was to play a central role in the political struggle on two fronts: in the United Nations, opposite Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, and in the State Department opposite Dulles, Under-Secretary Herbert Hoover and his adviser (later to replace Hoover as under-secretary) Christian Herter. Both Hammarskjöld and the Americans were determined to ensure that Israel made no gains, especially territorial ones, as a result of the war. Eban, backed by the rest of the embassy staff and, in conjunction with Golda Meir whenever she was in the United States, was in constant and direct contact with Ben-Gurion; his reports and assessments carried weight with the government and influenced its decisions, and in February 1957 he even rushed back to Israel to take part in its discussions.

The period of five months beginning with the onset of the war on 29 October 1956 and ending with the completion of the withdrawal in late March 1957 may be divided into the seven stages[9] described below:

1) Establishing military facts and political attitudes (29 October–8 November 1956)

The political campaign to consolidate the military gains of the Sinai Campaign began with full force with the convening of the Security Council on 30–31 October for three consecutive sessions. A draft resolution was tabled by the United States, demanding an immediate Israeli withdrawal and denying Israel any assistance. However, it swiftly became clear that Israel was not alone in the struggle — Britain and France presented Israel and Egypt with an ultimatum, calling on them to stay clear of the Suez Canal, and vetoing the American proposal. Contrary to French and British assumptions that this would nip the proceedings at the United Nations in the bud, a new proposal enabling the bypassing of the Security Council was promptly raised, advocating the use of the "Uniting for Peace" procedure which was first applied during the Korean War. The subject was transferred for discussion to the General Assembly, which pronounced an emergency special session which would

8 See no. 7.

9 See *The Political Battle*, pp. 1–3.

continue until a solution was found to the crisis in the Middle East. The emergency special session lasted ten days, during which the situation changed drastically, and the issue was then relegated to the Assembly's regular session.

Eban, who had still not been let in on the secret of the joint plan, took part in the discussion in the Security Council, making a short statement based on the instructions sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to all the missions, which were to present Israel's action as a large-scale reprisal aimed at destroying concentrations of Fedaiyun and their bases of operation.[10] He was instructed to accept the Anglo-French ultimatum but mainly to try to play for time.

On 2 November the General Assembly approved by a large majority the U.S. draft proposal calling for a cease-fire and a withdrawal of all the forces involved in the hostilities. An additional resolution called on all U.N. members to refrain from supplying arms and military materiel to the Middle East.

The resolution calling for withdrawal was the first of six such resolutions passed in the General Assembly during the next four months, their wording and tone becoming increasingly harsh to the point of threatening Israel with sanctions. The resolution on the prohibition of supplying arms to the region harmed only Israel, since all its arms deals with Britain and Canada were put on hold, whereas arms continued to flow unhindered to Arab countries (mainly to Syria) from the Soviet Union.

At this stage, yet another of the basic assumptions of the partners to the Sèvres agreement was shattered. Contrary to their belief that Eisenhower, busy with his election campaign for a second term as president, would not get involved, the president threw in his full weight, giving full support to the United Nations and its decisions. Moreover, as an expression of his anger at Israel for starting a war without consulting the United States, the president suspended all communication by normally accepted channels between heads of state, and chose to exert personal pressure on Ben-Gurion through the veteran Zionist leader Abba Hillel Silver.[11]

The lack of coordination between the three partners to the campaign was already becoming apparent. Following the General Assembly's resolution of 2 November, and since Israel had achieved most of its objectives in Sinai, Israel was ready to obey the United Nations and to agree to a cease-fire even before Britain's and France's ground forces had landed in Egypt. Eban's announcement at the Assembly of Israel's consent to a cease-fire brought furious reaction in Paris and London, and when Ben-Gurion learned of this he decided to accede to France's request and instructed Eban to hold off Israel's agreement while not annulling it officially.[12] Two days later the Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified Eban that there was no longer any

10 See no. 19.

11 See no. 14.

12 See nos. 46, 47.

need to be ambiguous about the cease-fire, since the British and French forces had now landed in Egypt; however he was to say that Israel's consent to the cease-fire was contingent upon the replies given by Egypt to five questions submitted to it by Israel, regarding the state of belligerency between the two countries.[13]

Since the fighting in Sinai continued even after the first resolution on withdrawal was passed, the General Assembly passed two more resolutions on 4 November, the more important of which gave instructions for the establishment of a U.N. Emergency Force (UNEF). The very next day a commanding team and a commander were appointed to the force — Major-General Eedson Burns, Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organisation in Israel — and the United Nations promptly embarked on setting up units and drafting personnel. At that point Israel decided that it would agree to the stationing of a U.N. force along the Suez Canal only, in order to ensure freedom of navigation to all nations, but would object to the entry of such a force into Sinai. It claimed that the danger of war had been eliminated once Israel and Egypt had agreed to a cease-fire and that all their differences must be resolved through direct peace negotiations.[14]

On 5 November a new factor entered the scene. Since the beginning of the war, the Soviet Union had done practically nothing to halt the hostilities except for a draft proposal for a cease-fire and withdrawal submitted to the Security Council on 30 October and vetoed by Britain and France. The reason for the Soviet inaction was the revolt in Hungary, which broke out at the same time as the Sinai-Suez crisis.[15] Only after it was forcibly quelled, with the Soviet army's takeover of Budapest on 4 November, could the Soviet Union turn its attention to the other crisis. It then immediately embarked on a series of forceful measures:

1) Dispatching messages to Britain, France and Israel containing a threat of the use of force should they fail to comply with the General Assembly resolutions. These warnings to the three states contained implied mention of the use of missiles, which caused panic in Western capitals and unprecedented pressure on Israel to put an end to the crisis;
2) A proposal to the United States (in a message to President Eisenhower) that the two powers cooperate, even employing military force if necessary, to put an end to the war in the Middle East; despite his anger with the partners in the Suez-Sinai venture, Eisenhower refused to co-operate with the power which had just crushed Hungary.
3) An initiative to convene the Security Council on the night between 5–6 November to discuss "hostilities against Egypt," and a draft resolution calling for withdrawal of forces within 12 hours, otherwise the United

[13] See no. 49.

[14] See no. 56.

[15] See Editorial Note no. 7.

States and the Soviet Union would be asked to come to Egypt's help. This last initiative was prevented by a majority of members of the Security Council.

Even harsher measures were directed against Israel. A message sent on 5 November by Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin to Ben-Gurion[16] contained the threat that Israel's actions called into question its very existence as a state; in addition, as of the first day of the war, all agreements for the supply of crude fuel oil and mazut (heavy fuel oil) to Israel were cancelled, and the Soviet ambassador to Israel, Alexandre Abramov, was recalled a week later.

Immediately after receiving the message from Bulganin, Ben-Gurion decided to send Meir and the director-general of the Ministry of Defence, Shimon Peres, to France, to probe France's attitude should the Soviet Union act on its threats. The two left for Paris on 6 November and met with Foreign Minister Christian Pineau and Minister of Defence Maurice Bourgès-Maunoury. The atmosphere was grave due to rumours that had reached the French of massive shipments of arms from the Soviet Union to the Middle East and of "volunteers" being sent to Syria. The French expressed their sympathy towards Israel but could not promise any actual aid.

The purpose of the brutal anti-Israeli campaign initiated by the Soviet Union was to bring about an immediate Israeli withdrawal. Before its severity became clear, Ben-Gurion gave a victory speech in the Knesset on 7 November. In his speech, the prime minister criticised the United Nations and its handling of the crisis, outlined Israel's political goals in the region and defined seven principles for Israel's relations with Egypt and with the other Arab countries.[17] The Knesset, by a majority of 88 votes of all parties (except for *Maki*, the communist party), passed a resolution supporting the prime minister's address. However, within 24 hours matters came to a head, bringing about a complete turnaround in Ben-Gurion's stance.

On the day that Ben-Gurion gave his address in the Knesset, he received a message from Eisenhower demanding that he abide by U.N. resolutions unconditionally and without delay.[18] Hoover (the acting secretary of state) and his deputy Rountree, who gave Reuven Shiloah, the minister in Israel's embassy in Washington, the president's message, were even more blunt. Their fear that the Soviet Union would adopt a policy which could bring the world to the brink of global conflagration caused them to accuse Israel of endangering world peace.[19] Hoover went so far as to end the talk with Shiloah with an explicit threat that any refusal by Israel would result in harsh measures against it, starting with cutting off all private and government aid and ending with sanctions imposed by the United Nations.

16 See no. 61.

17 See Editorial Note no. 69.

18 See no. 70.

19 See no. 71.

In fact, the United States was the only Western country actually to apply economic sanctions against Israel. As soon as the war broke out the United States cut off the grant-in-aid, the implementation of the Food Surplus Law, and the negotiations on a loan from the Export-Import Bank.[20] There was concern that even the transfer of funds from the United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Development Bonds would be stopped.

Ben-Gurion's first move was to find out through Eban whether, in the prevailing atmosphere in Washington, there was any possibility of arranging a meeting between him and Eisenhower, where he could present Israel's position. Eban replied that in view of the hostile atmosphere towards Israel in Washington such a meeting was out of the question.[21]

Following the threats by the State Department, the hostility in the United Nations, the Soviet threats and the accusations that Israel was responsible for creating tensions that might lead to a world war, Ben-Gurion changed his position. On 8 November the government convened for two urgent sessions. In the first, the text of a reply to Bulganin was approved[22] and in the second a decision on withdrawal was reached. This decision was included in a letter of reply to Eisenhower,[23] in order to involve the United States in any future arrangement in the Middle East. At the same time an identical text of the decision was dispatched to the U.N. secretary-general.

It was past midnight when Ben-Gurion addressed the nation on the radio and announced Israel's consent to the demand for withdrawal, making it dependent on the entry of UNEF into the region of the Suez Canal. By using this wording Ben-Gurion intended to buy Israel some time, to delay the actual withdrawal and allow the world to calm down from the war scare, thus giving Israel the opportunity to prepare for the approaching political campaign.[24]

2) The struggle in the United Nations (9 November–31 December 1956)

By now the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been drafted to the front line of battle, and on 10 November Ben-Gurion himself gave instructions for information and public relations activities to Israel's missions around the world. These

20 See no. 25, note 1.

21 See stenographic record of the government meeting of 8 November 1956, in file 77.0/9/32.

22 See no. 83.

23 See no. 79.

24 See D. Ben-Gurion, *The Sinai Campaign*, Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 1959, p. 239 [Hebrew].

instructions emphasised the function of UNEF in the Suez Canal zone; the need for demilitarisation of Sinai, freedom of navigation for Israel through the Straits of Tiran and in the Gulf of Aqaba (generally known in Israel as the Gulf of Eilat) under protection of the IDF; explanation of the true nature of Nasser's regime and warnings of the danger of a Soviet take-over of the Middle East.[25]

The Foreign Ministry representatives set to work to bring about a change in the attitude to Israel. Eban and the embassy staff held a series of meetings with members of the House of Representatives and of the Senate of both parties, with State Department officials and with journalists. In addition, they urged the heads of the Conference of Presidents — the umbrella body for the important Jewish organisations in the United States — to act to explain Israel's stand and demonstrate solidarity with it. Golda Meir, now in New York, held talks with British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd, French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau, Canadian Secretary for External Affairs Lester Pearson and other foreign ministers who had come to attend the session of the U.N. General Assembly.[26] By now the three countries involved — Israel, Britain and France — had coordinated their positions on withdrawal from the Suez Canal, and made this conditional on the stationing of UNEF along the Canal, ensuring freedom of navigation and that there was no Egyptian control of the area. Britain and France believed that their troops would be part of UNEF and would be stationed along the Canal. They would thus achieve some of their objectives in this war.

Meanwhile Ben-Gurion had received a second message from Bulganin (15 November)[27] to which an urgent response was required. Bulganin rejected all Ben-Gurion's explanations about the causes of the war, again placed all responsibility on Israel, accused it of war-mongering and even repeated his threat of the danger of destruction looming over it. Meir and Eban responded firmly: the minister of foreign affairs scheduled a meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Dimitri Shepilov in order to demand clarification as to whether this threat really entailed an intention to attack Israel; notes were dispatched to the State Department, and a meeting there was arranged for Meir. The Israeli mission also considered lodging a complaint with the Security Council or the General Assembly concerning the Soviet Union's threats and its interference in the negotiations between Israel and the United Nations.[28] Another campaign against the U.S.S.R. was waged by Israel's embassy in Washington and its mission to the United Nations, and concerned rumours and accusations spread by Syria, egged on by the Soviets, of supposed concentrations of Israeli troops along its borders. These accusations were eventually disproved

[25] See no. 89.

[26] See nos. 115, 116 and 117.

[27] See no. 113.

[28] See no. 114.

and dispelled, after vigorous efforts to persuade Hammarskjöld and the dispatch of U.N. observers to the border to report about the situation.[29]

The United States contented itself with issuing a warning against a Soviet attack on the members of the Baghdad Pact (Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran and Britain), but did not mention Israel.[30] It was only in December that relations with the Soviet Union eased somewhat: on the 8th of that month the Soviet Union cancelled its threat of sending "volunteers" to the Middle East, and on the 21st it announced the return of the ambassador to Israel, six weeks after he had been recalled to Moscow.

The initial meetings of Meir and Eban with Hammarskjöld (on 19 November) were very tense. Difficulties emerged as soon as the subject of a withdrawal was mentioned, along with the link between withdrawal and Israel's demands from Egypt and the function of UNEF in ensuring free navigation through the Suez Canal.[31] During the talk Hammarskjöld made reference to a report he had received about the town of Rafah in the Gaza Strip, where, it was said, there had been mass riots with some 50 dead and numerous injured. Hammarskjöld asked whether, in light of the situation, Israel would agree to allow U.N. observers to enter Rafah and Gaza immediately. Meir, however, insisted on first getting answers to the questions she had submitted to Egypt.[32]

Since these talks with Hammarskjöld had ended in disappointment, Meir and Eban wished to ascertain the U.S. position. They met with the U.S. representative to the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge, and explained Israel's position on Gaza, the Gulf of Aqaba, the Suez Canal and Sinai. However Lodge had not yet received instructions from the State Department about the U.S. stand on these matters.[33] In a telegram to Ben-Gurion, Meir and Eban expressed their frustration that the United States was not joining the West in its efforts to find a stable solution to the issues being handled by Hammarskjöld. They argued that if Eisenhower did not give his attention to these issues there was no hope of formulating a clear policy and an effort to discuss matters with him should be made. Meir and Eban proposed to inform the State Department that the foreign minister had a personal message to convey to the president together with oral explanations. Ben-Gurion approved and they began putting out feelers, but quickly learned that the president had already refused to meet with the prime ministers of Britain and France, Sir Anthony Eden and Guy Mollet; thus it was unlikely that he would agree to invite Israel's foreign minister of all people.

29 See no. 139 and note 2 there.

30 See no. 175.

31 See no. 122.

32 See no. 123.

33 See no. 135.

The members of Israel's mission to the United Nations continued their efforts, with intensive talks and contacts with foreign ministers of European countries, with officials in the Administration and with journalists in the attempt to get the United States to adopt a more active and positive policy. But all was to no avail. On the other hand, the indirect contacts which Eisenhower preferred at this stage continued. Jacob Javits, the attorney general of New York State, who was Jewish and a friend of Israel, arrived in Israel in the last week of November, bringing with him a personal message from Eisenhower to Ben-Gurion. He held talks with Ben-Gurion and with Walter Eytan, director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which he described the main points of U.S. policy in the Middle East and listened to reports of the danger of Soviet penetration of the region and of Africa if Nasser regained his strength.[34]

On 12 November the regular session of the 11th General Assembly opened, and within a few days the crisis in the Middle East was on the agenda. The U.N. secretary-general presented reports on UNEF (whose units had meanwhile begun arriving in Egypt) and on its tasks, on the preparations for clearing the Suez Canal, and on the extent to which the previous U.N. resolutions demanding withdrawal of forces had been complied with. These reports were discussed by the Assembly on the 23rd of the month, and an Afro-Asian draft resolution was approved, calling once again for prompt withdrawal. Belgium's minister of foreign affairs, Paul Henri Spaak, tried to introduce some far-reaching amendments into the resolution. Although these amendments reflected the views of most West European countries and their reservations about the one-sided stand of the Afro-Asian bloc and the aloof attitude of the U.S., the initiative failed. In fact the amendments had never stood a chance of being accepted, since the joint votes of the Afro-Asian and Soviet blocs came to more than a third of the votes in the Assembly, the number required to block any proposal.

At that time Israel had taken an unexpected blow from Turkey, which — following a decision taken by members of the Baghdad Pact — had decided to reconsider its relations with Israel and recall its minister in Tel Aviv. However, this did not constitute a total severance of relations, since ties in other areas remained unaffected, and the Turks did not demand that Israel's minister, Maurice Fischer, be returned to Israel (his term of office in Ankara was to end at the end of December in any case).[35]

Together with the political struggle during the first month after the war, Israel's representatives in the United States and in Europe were required to take swift and decisive action to assist the Jewish community in Egypt. The daily life and status of this community underwent a complete upheaval immediately after the war broke

34 See no. 154.

35 See nos. 150, 151.

out. In early November the Egyptian government issued a series of orders restricting the freedom of movement of the Jews and members of other foreign communities; censorship was imposed; and a legal basis was provided for seizing hostages, conducting mass arrests and revoking citizenship. Many had their assets confiscated and were left without any source of income; others were deported and many were subjected to terrorisation and harassment. These pressures and restrictions on economic activities brought about a growing movement to leave Egypt. The first few thousands fleeing Egypt reached Italy and France, who evacuated their citizens from Egypt and also gave temporary asylum to several thousand Jewish refugees. All told, some 20,000 Jews left Egypt within the space of one year.[36]

From late November onwards Israel took a number of steps in the United Nations on behalf of Egyptian Jewry: the minister of foreign affairs submitted a note on the subject to the president of the Assembly and Eban made a speech in the Assembly describing all the facts known to Israel and emphasising Egypt's international obligations, which was submitted to the president of the Assembly as a memorandum to be distributed to all members of the United Nations. Israeli mission staff spoke with members of many other missions and asked them to raise the matter at the Assembly and also to approach Egypt, the president of the Assembly and the U.N. secretary-general. The Israeli mission also approached the secretary-general several times.[37] Following these requests and similar ones by the British and the French, the secretary-general met twice with Egypt's minister of foreign affairs, Mahmoud Fawzi, and demanded full details from the secretary's personal representative in Cairo. Hammarskjöld promised that if he did not receive satisfactory reports, he would ask Egypt to agree to stationing observers on its territory.

In contrast with the sympathetic response of France and Italy, who agreed to take action on behalf of the Jewish community in Egypt, the talk which Meir had with Hoover on the subject was difficult and tense. He responded in an indifferent and evasive manner to all the suggestions by Meir for the United States to increase its involvement and take a firm public stand on the issue.[38]

In late November and early December Eban held a series of talks with Hammarskjöld to discuss the issues which Israel considered as a *sine qua non* for its consent to a withdrawal, namely: the duties and extent of the authority of UNEF, its deployment in Sinai, the length of its stay there and the conditions under which it would be withdrawn. But Hammarskjöld remained true to his usual aloof and formalistic attitude. He demanded that Israel withdraw first and only then would its demands be discussed. As for Egypt, the secretary-general emphasised the latter's sovereignty over Sinai and the Gaza Strip, based on the armistice agreements, which

36 See M. Laskier, *Israel and Jewish Immigration from North Africa, 1948-1970*, Sede Boker, Ben-Gurion Institute, 2006, pp. 141-150 [Hebrew].

37 See no. 161.

38 See no. 197.

he insisted must be fully maintained.[39] During these four months (November to the beginning of March) Hammarskjöld submitted no less than six reports to the General Assembly on these issues, all of which were hostile to the Israeli stand. Even Israel's announcement on 1 December of a retreat of 50 kilometres along the entire Canal did not produce any softening in his attitude.

After UNEF entered Sinai in early December, Hammarskjöld raised the issue of the destruction which Israel had left behind — destroyed roads, railways, airfields and communication lines — and claimed that these actions were a breach of U.N. Assembly resolutions. Israel believed that the destruction would prevent Egypt from rebuilding its strength and that in any case it was desirable that the Sinai desert serve as a natural barrier between Israeli and Egyptian forces.[40] Nevertheless Eban warned that this issue could cause a major clash with the United Nations, and therefore conveyed to the secretary-general, on 12 December, Israel's pledge to cause no more damage in the Sinai.[41]

In early December Israel decided on a policy of delay in the implementation of the withdrawal from Sinai. The rate fixed for the withdrawal was 25 kilometres per week, and the government insisted on linking it with solutions to the basic issues it had raised: the demilitarisation of Sinai, preventing its again becoming an Egyptian military base, and freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and the Gulf. In order to increase pressure on Hammarskjöld to discuss these demands it was decided that the IDF would stop at the El-Arish line and not continue its withdrawal, even if this resulted in a clash with the secretary-general.[42] In a meeting between Chief of Staff Dayan and Burns on 16 December, Burns agreed to the rate of withdrawal proposed by Dayan, since in any case he did not yet have enough troops at his disposal for full deployment.

A problem that arose on the first day of the war and was discussed throughout this period was that of fuel. Soon after the cutting off of the supply of fuel oil from the Soviet Union on the first day of the war, Israel began vigorous efforts worldwide to find alternative sources. Of all the countries that Israel approached, it was France which agreed to supply it with fuel. At the same time, in view of the possibility that the Suez Canal, blocked by Egypt during the war, might remain closed for some time, a new proposal was raised: to approach Britain and France and interest them in a plan for laying an oil pipeline from Eilat to the Mediterranean. The idea was to lay the pipe as soon as possible, so as to make it operative and provide for Israel's fuel needs, while transferring the remaining oil to Britain and France.[43]

39 See nos. 182, 183.

40 See no. 179.

41 See no. 208.

42 See nos. 214, 217.

43 See nos. 98, 126.

Negotiations with France began immediately, and Ambassador Tsur held numerous talks with Guy Mollet and staff of the French Foreign Ministry. Concurrently Israel decided on 22 November to lay a temporary pipe, 8 inches in diameter and 200 kilometres long, from Eilat to Beer Sheba, from which the oil would be transported by trucks to Haifa. In January 1957 it was decided to lay a 12-inch pipe from Beer Sheba to Sukrir (Ashdod).[44] At the same time, the option of laying a larger diameter pipe which would also enable export of oil was not ruled out. Indeed, on 25 December Israel was informed that the French government had decided to finance the difference in cost between an 8-inch and a 16-inch pipe.[45]

This decision met strong opposition in France. Paul Ramadier, the minister of economic affairs, opposed France's participation, claiming that it would jeopardise the oil supply to France from Arab countries, as well as possibly harming the French oil company, in which the government held a 35% share. French Foreign Ministry officials, too, with their traditional pro-Arab orientation, tried to torpedo the plan. However in January Mollet confirmed the plan on conditions of strict secrecy,[46] though progress was slow. It was agreed to appoint a committee to go to Israel to examine the situation, but by the end of March nothing had happened. When Finance Minister Levi Eshkol came to Paris on 21 March, talks were again held about French participation in the pipeline.

The oil for the Eilat-Haifa pipeline was to be supplied by Iran, which proposed in November 1956 to provide Israel with oil exceeding its overall consumption needs through the Iranian national petroleum company. However, making Iran into Israel's chief supplier involved political and practical problems, such as the lack of suitable tankers. In addition, Israel did not wish to take any steps contrary to the interests of the Consortium (the union of western petrol companies drilling for oil in Iran). In order to avoid revealing the source, the Israel government decided to purchase some of its petrol from Iran through the French company Petrofrance, which also undertook to transport it.[47] However, Zvi Doriel (head of Israel's mission in Teheran) and Israel Kosloff (the government's fuel adviser) demanded that most of the petrol be purchased directly from the national Iranian petrol company. It was therefore decided to delay signing of the agreement with Petrofrance and await the arrival of the first shipments to Eilat.[48] The U.S. tanker *Kern Hills* loaded in Iran on 26 March, arriving ten days later when the new oil pipeline to Israel began operating.

44 See no. 148.

45 See no. 246, note 3.

46 See no. 319, note 3.

47 See U. Bialer, "Petrol from Iran — Zvi Doriel's Mission in Tehran, 1956–1963," *Iyunim*, 8 (1998), pp. 150-181; *Iyunim*, 9 (1999), pp. 128-168 [Hebrew].

48 *Ibid.* See also no. 374.

Talks with Hammarskjöld were renewed on 19 December, and he complained about the slow rate of the withdrawal from Sinai agreed on in the meeting with Burns and said that he considered matters to be at a deadlock. Eban once again listed the guarantees demanded by Israel before it would resume its withdrawal. At the same time, to mitigate somewhat the unfavourable report which Hammarskjöld was expected to submit to the General Assembly, Eban conveyed Israel's pledge to evacuate the entire area as far as El-Arish by 7 January.[49] At this point both Ben-Gurion and Meir reached the conclusion that there was no longer any point in discussing things exclusively with the secretary-general, and that pressure should be applied to get the United States directly involved. Meir did not believe Hammarskjöld's promises that he would postpone handling the issues of Gaza and the Gulf to a later stage and cast doubt on his fairness and trustworthiness.

Therefore, on 22 December, Ben-Gurion met with the U.S. ambassador to Israel, Edward Lawson, to discuss the U.S. stand on freedom of navigation and the demilitarisation of Sinai. Ben-Gurion said that Israel wished to coordinate its policy with that of the United States, while preserving its vital interests and that Eban should meet with Dulles as soon as possible to discuss these issues before the withdrawal to the El-Arish line. As a result a meeting between Eban, Meir and Dulles was fixed. [50] Eban agreed with Ben-Gurion that Israel should concentrate on freedom of navigation and on not returning to the previous status quo in Sinai, and undertook to tell Dulles bluntly that Israel would risk everything for the sake of these two principles. On the other hand, Eban had reservations about Ben-Gurion's view of Hammarskjöld and believed it was impossible to exclude or circumvent him, since the United States was determined to operate through him. Eban therefore proposed that the next moves should be a talk with Dulles and submission of questions to Hammarskjöld on the assurances that Israel was demanding.[51] At the same time, Israel began creating *faits accomplis*: on 26 December the first Israeli Navy ship arrived in Eilat, and work began on building a naval base there.

On 28 December the crucial talk took place between Dulles, Eban and Meir. Meir said that Israel wished the United States to become involved and to cooperate to prevent a crisis. To that end she asked Dulles to declare that the United States supported freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and prevention of the return of Egypt to Gaza and to make it unambiguously clear to Hammarskjöld that the United States would guarantee any arrangement proposed for freedom of navigation in the Gulf and would use its influence in the General Assembly should an argument ensue on these matters.

49 See nos. 221, 226.

50 See no. 229.

51 See no. 237.

Dulles replied that the issues of the Gulf and Gaza were subject to negotiations with Hammarskjöld, that the United States supported him and that he himself was not authorised to make any arrangements with Israel behind Hammarskjöld's back. He added that the United States was committed to freedom of navigation for all in the Suez Canal and supported the principle that the Gulf of Aqaba remain an international waterway open to all. As for the Gaza Strip, he said he had no detailed plan. Later in the conversation, Dulles criticised Israel's policy, especially its long-term political perspective, and claimed that it had not tried hard enough to dispel the hatred towards it in neighbouring countries, and that its strong-arm policy and use of retaliation had failed totally. However, he ended by saying that he did not want his candour to be misunderstood, since the basic sympathy of the United States for Israel remained firm.[52]

Ben-Gurion was furious with this one-sided presentation of matters and Dulles' preaching to Israel. In his meeting with Ambassador Lawson on 31 December the prime minister took the opportunity to present his point of view: he described the chain of events that led to the war and the U.S. role in it, and the deep-seated reasons for the Arabs' hatred of Israel. He demanded assurances from the United States and stressed Israel's desire to coordinate policy with it.[53]

Following the Meir-Dulles talk, Ben-Gurion decided to anchor Israel's demands in government decisions. A discussion was held by the government on 31 December and resulted in several fundamental decisions (later re-affirmed), as follows: Israel would object to the return of Egyptian forces to the Gaza Strip and to the entry of UNEF to Gaza; the IDF would remain in Sharm el-Sheikh and along the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba until freedom of navigation for all was ensured; it was desirable to demilitarise Sinai or at least its eastern strip; the IDF would continue its withdrawal at a rate of 25 kilometres per week; Israel recognised the need to find a solution to the refugee problem through the United Nations and was willing to assist in this solution.[54]

3) Completing the withdrawal from Sinai and Israel's demand for guarantees (1–23 January 1957)

On 4 January another meeting was held between Dayan and Burns, during which an exchange of prisoners of war was discussed. Burns said that he knew of only four Israeli prisoners, and in exchange for them Dayan was prepared to hand over the thousands of Egyptian prisoners held by Israel. As for the Fedaiyun who had

52 See no. 254.

53 See no. 257.

54 See no. 261.

been captured and tried, Dayan made it clear that Israel did not consider them prisoners of war and therefore would not release them, but would be willing to consider exchanging them for the Egyptian Jews tried in Cairo and found guilty of espionage for Israel in January 1955.[55] Burns undertook to bring this proposal to the Egyptians, but commented that, in his opinion, Egypt would not accept it and would agree only to the prisoner of war exchange, without the Fedaiyun, in order to get back the prisoners held by Israel.[56]

On 5 January the United States added another factor to the balance of power in the Middle East — the president's new Middle East policy (the Eisenhower Doctrine), which he presented to a joint session of both houses of Congress. Congress was asked to grant the president powers to use economic aid and even military force in order to support Middle East countries under threat by the Soviet Union. This plan indicated a turning point in the previous policy of the United States, which had been to lay all the region's problems before the United Nations, expecting that organisation to provide solutions. But if Israel hoped that the new doctrine would fulfill its hopes and the United States would agree to the demands it had been making since it had agreed to withdraw, these hopes were quickly dashed. Towards the end of his speech in Congress Eisenhower stated very clearly that the Israeli-Arab conflict, the future of the Arab refugees, and the status of the Suez Canal were all previously existing issues, even if they were now aggravated due to Soviet involvement in the Middle East. Eisenhower thus excluded these topics from the scope of his doctrine, indicating that the United States intended to continue to leave them to the United Nations. [57]

Eban's meeting with Hammarskjöld on 5 January turned into an overt clash over the rate of Israel's withdrawal and also revealed substantial disagreements between them concerning the function of UNEF. After this talk the Israeli mission to the United Nations held a discussion, and its conclusion, with which Meir concurred, was that the tactic of "buying time" was no longer effective. It had become clear that remaining in Sinai actually weakened Israel's position in the battle for freedom of navigation in the Gulf and for Gaza. By the time it agreed to evacuate all of Sinai, neither Hammarskjöld nor the Americans would be willing to discuss arrangements for free navigation. Further delays in the withdrawal would also make it difficult for Israel to gain support for its demands at the General Assembly. Based on these assessments, it was decided to inform Hammarskjöld of Israel's willingness to complete the evacuation of Sinai, excluding Sharm el-Sheikh, after receiving guarantees of freedom of navigation and ensuring a wide separation

55 See Vol. 9, Editorial Note no. 536 and no. 269, note 3 in this volume.

56 A report of this meeting was written by Mordechai Bar-On, bureau head of the CGS. See no. 269.

57 See Editorial Note no. 275.

between Egyptian and Israeli forces. No mention would be made of of Gaza in this announcement.[58]

Ben-Gurion's stand was more determined. Though he supported the evacuation of Sinai even if no guarantees were obtained, he insisted that Israel would not pull out of Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh even if the United States supported a General Assembly resolution to impose sanctions on Israel.[59] Considering the struggle that awaited Israel in the General Assembly, Ben-Gurion recalled Meir and Eban to Israel on 8 January in order to take part in the government deliberations. Meir replied that Eban's presence in New York was vital for the continued political and public relations campaign and she would therefore come alone.

The possibility of sanctions against Israel seemed very real at that point. Mordecai Kidron, the deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, reported from New York that the Arabs were expecting the secretary-general's report any day, and immediately afterwards they would demand that the Assembly convene and ask it to consider sanctions should Israel refuse to withdraw its troops immediately.[60]

On 10 January Ben-Gurion called a consultation to discuss the possibility of sanctions. The meeting ended with the decision that nevertheless, Israel would not withdraw from the Straits of Tiran, the Gulf of Aqaba and Gaza under the existing conditions. Herzog expressed his opinion that there would be no two-thirds majority in the Assembly in favour of sanctions. Ben-Gurion asked how long Israel could withstand such a situation economically, without the assistance of funds from the UJA and the Israel Bonds. Eshkol's estimate was that Israel could sustain itself for about three months and that it would be possible, by rationing, to extend that period for a few more months.[61]

In a session of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of the Knesset that same evening, Ben-Gurion proposed not to withdraw and to appoint a committee that would start immediately on preparing an emergency economic plan in case the United Nations or the United States were to impose sanctions. It was also proposed to mobilise world Jewry to stand by Israel.

In order to gain time and delay the submission of the secretary-general's report and the convening of the Assembly, Israel had to continue its dialogue with Hammarskjöld, despite everything. Therefore Ben-Gurion instructed Eban to deliver to Hammarskjöld the text of a general declaration, saying that Israel's withdrawal to the international border would be completed by 22 January, then a few days later to submit to him the demands for guarantees of freedom of navigation in the Gulf and continued Israeli control of the Gaza Strip.

[58] See no. 278.

[59] See no. 281.

[60] See no. 289.

[61] See no. 293.

All these subjects were discussed on 13 January in the government meeting attended by Meir. Ben-Gurion himself drafted the decisions approved at the meeting: to evacuate the Gulf of Aqaba only after freedom of navigation had been ensured and guarantees obtained for this, as well as for freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal; Israel would continue to be responsible for security in the Gaza Strip and autonomous self-rule of the local residents would be established; to demand the demilitarisation of Sinai or at least of the part bordering on Israel; to assert Israel's willingness to contribute to a solution of the refugee problem.[62] Even though taking these decisions at this time was designed mainly to influence the secretary-general's report and the resolutions of the General Assembly, Ben-Gurion stressed in a telegram to Eban that the IDF would remain stationed on the coast of the Gulf of Aqaba in defiance of any Assembly resolution, since Israel recognised the sovereignty of justice rather than the formal authority of the United Nations. In addition, Israel rejected any resolution on returning to the armistice lines, since the armistice agreement with Egypt had ceased to exist and Israel considered any resolution based on it as null and void.[63]

On 15 January, in a talk between Eban and Pearson, a proposal was raised which laid the basis for a solution. Pearson proposed to deal first of all with the issue of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, and to settle it by stationing UNEF troops there with a special defined and permanent mandate. He proposed to decide on an additional postponement of discussion of the Gaza issue due to its complexity. Pearson suggested that, should Hammarskjöld continue to insist, a resolution would be drafted as agreed by the Western nations, and an effort made to obtain sufficient support for its approval; he even expressed willingness to head the campaign at the Assembly.[64]

On 17 January the U.N. General Assembly convened once again to discuss the situation in the Middle East. There were two documents on the agenda: the secretary-general's interim report and a draft resolution proposed by 25 members of the Afro-Asian bloc. In his report Hammarskjöld contented himself with a factual description of the progress of the withdrawal so far. In the draft resolution by the Afro-Asian bloc, Israel was condemned for not having obeyed the Assembly's previous resolutions and the secretary-general was charged with supervising the carrying out of the withdrawal. The original wording of the proposal was stronger and also contained threats of sanctions against Israel, but it aroused strong opposition among delegations from Western countries. As a result of their efforts and pressures on the Afro-Asian bloc, as well as reservations on the part of some Asian members, the proposed resolution was toned down and the paragraph on sanctions removed.

62 See no. 306.

63 See no. 307.

64 See no. 315.

After these changes, the resolution was approved by the Assembly on 19 January with an overwhelming majority of 74 votes, with only Israel and France objecting, and Costa Rica and Cuba abstaining.[65]

Britain supported the resolution, and would have supported it even if it had included a paragraph about sanctions — as was made clear to Elath by the British Foreign Office — for fear of the Arab countries cutting off Britain's oil supply.[66] Britain also continued to adhere strictly to the General Assembly's resolution of 2 November, which called on all U.N. members to refrain from supplying weapons to the Middle East. Since then, Britain had maintained an embargo on the supply of aircraft engines and spare parts and ammunition for the destroyers it was about to provide to Israel, despite urgent requests made by Elath to the Foreign Office and Foreign Secretary Lloyd himself.[67]

Britain's attitude towards Israel did not change despite two highly significant events that took place during those months: the first was Eden's resignation on 9 January and his replacement by Harold Macmillan; the second was the talks between Britain and Jordan, which began in early February, about cancelling their mutual defence agreement and evacuating Britain's bases in Jordan. The agreement was indeed cancelled on 13 March.

On 22 January the Israeli government again ratified the decisions taken on the 13th of the month. In addition, it was decided that Ben-Gurion would make a political statement in the Knesset. The aim was to bring matters to the attention of U.N. members and world public opinion before the secretary-general made his final report to the U.N. Assembly, and to foil the Western countries which had begun formulating a plan of their own. This plan was intended to solve the issues of the Gaza Strip, Sharm el-Sheikh and the Gulf of Aqaba by deploying UNEF on the Egyptian border along the armistice demarcation lines, both on the Egyptian and the Israeli sides.[68]

Relations with Hammarskjöld quickly deteriorated in the next two meetings that took place between him and Eban. In the first, the secretary-general insisted once again on linking the Gulf and Gaza issues with the armistice agreement with Egypt; in the second, in which he received a memorandum with the Israeli government's decisions, he expressed undisguised disappointment and the talks ended in deadlock and crisis.[69]

65 See Editorial Note no. 320.

66 See no. 325.

67 See nos. 282, 325.

68 See no. 334.

69 See nos. 331, 332.

4) The height of the crisis in the negotiations with Hammarskjöld (24 January–11 February 1957)

In his final report to the Assembly on 24 January, the secretary-general totally rejected Israel's proposals and once again insisted on withdrawal as the first step, a return to the armistice agreement with Egypt, and stationing UNEF on both sides of the border. This time the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman openly criticised the report, calling it negative, unconstructive, one-sided, and ignoring the facts with the aim of restoring the *status quo* prior to the war.[70]

At the same time Pearson's plan began taking shape. On 26 January, he presented to Michael Comay (Israel's ambassador to Canada) the main points: all the countries which supported it would pledge to uphold freedom of navigation in the Gulf, and one of UNEF's roles would be to supervise this. This force would also be deployed in the Gaza Strip and along the border. The Israeli administration would leave the Gaza Strip, and the United Nations alone would supervise the new regime there. Pearson, too, demanded that both sides reaffirm the armistice agreement, but its supervision and maintenance would be carried out by UNEF. Pearson did not want to deal with the issue of Israel's freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal in his plan, but he did consider including that principle by means of a reference to the Security Council's resolution of September 1951 as a paragraph in the preamble.[71]

However, five days later Pearson dropped his proposal because of the resolution taken by the Assembly on 2 February. In fact, two resolutions were adopted: the first again called on Israel to complete the withdrawal to behind the armistice demarcation lines (the Assembly's sixth resolution on this matter). The second declared that the withdrawal must be followed by action to ensure progress towards creation of peace terms between Israel and Egypt. The U.N. secretary-general was charged with implementing the measures proposed in his report, including the deployment of UNEF along the armistice demarcation lines in the Gaza Strip and in the Gulf of Aqaba. This proposal, of which the United States was a key initiator, was rather general and non-committal in nature and did not clearly define the role of UNEF. The United States thus acceded to the pressure of the Afro-Asian bloc, and as a result Pearson relinquished his own initiative. Despite its flaws, Israel saw the second resolution as important because it showed some progress towards international recognition of the fact that there was no point in resolutions on withdrawal without addressing the hostility that had preceded the war. Therefore Israel only abstained from voting on the resolution.[72]

70 See no. 356.

71 See no. 352.

72 See no. 363; see Editorial Note no. 366.

On the following day Eisenhower sent a firm message to Ben-Gurion, demanding that the latter accept the General Assembly's resolutions which had been initiated and supported by the United States. He even included an implied threat that, should Israel not comply, the United States would join in any measures the United Nations might take against it (i.e., sanctions). This threat was repeated in a press conference held by Dulles on 5 February.[73]

It should be mentioned that at the time, King Saud of Saudi Arabia was visiting the United States, and the Administration showered him with honours and gestures of friendship in order to obtain his support for the Eisenhower Doctrine. Israel's representatives watched this visit with concern, worried that Israel would pay the price for obtaining King Saud's allegiance and support. Rumours in Washington implied that Eisenhower had pledged to the king that he would strongly insist that Israel evacuate Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh without delay, and that this was the reason for the president's message to Ben-Gurion.[74]

However, the Israeli government held its ground and in a meeting held on 3 February following the resolutions at the General Assembly, its earlier decisions were reaffirmed.[75] An announcement by the Foreign Ministry the following day stated that Israel remained firm in its position as decided by the Knesset on 23 January concerning the Gulf of Eilat (Aqaba) and the Gaza Strip, and that the solution to these two problems was cessation of hostilities on Egypt's part on land and on sea.[76]

Two further meetings between Eban and Hammarskjöld did not bring about a breakthrough. But at this point some unrest began to be felt in U.S. political circles, in opposition to the tough line taken by Dulles and the president towards Israel. After Dulles' statement at the press conference, Senator William Knowland, the Republican leader in the Senate, came out with a strong statement deploring the discrimination against Israel: Israel was being threatened with sanctions, while no one had even mentioned sanctions against the Soviet Union, which had brutally suppressed the rebellion in Hungary. These statements caused reverberations and reactions, and on the following day (6 February), 41 Republican members of Congress addressed the Administration, asking it not to demand Israel's withdrawal until direct negotiations with Egypt were under way. Even before that, on 23 January, 75 Democratic members of Congress had come out with a similar statement, demanding that the United States insist on freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal, the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba before demanding that Israel evacuate the territory it was holding. This opposition in Congress, and especially

73 See no. 371 and note 5, *ibid*.

74 See Editorial Note no. 376.

75 See no. 372, note 1.

76 See no. 372.

in the Senate, had an effect on the Administration, which needed their support for approving the Eisenhower Doctrine.[77]

On 8 February, while in Israel demonstrations were taking place against the threat of sanctions, Ben-Gurion replied to Eisenhower's message. The prime minister argued that while Israel had already completed its withdrawal from Sinai, Egypt had not relinquished its belligerent status with Israel; he further protested the discrimination against Israel practiced by the United Nations by threatening to impose sanctions on it. Ben-Gurion justified Israel's demand for guarantees of freedom of navigation and for putting a stop to the Fedaiyun actions, and expressed his expectation that the United States and other countries would provide Israel with such assurances.[78]

5) Direct contact with the United States on the proposal for guarantees (11–24 February 1957)

Despite Eisenhower's tough message and Dulles' words about sanctions, it seems that at the same time a change began to take effect in the position of the United States, specifically in the State Department. Several factors were responsible: the strong objection to sanctions, initially expressed in Congress by members of both parties, was now felt in the press, which demanded that the United States give direct guarantees to Israel, and in public opinion. The visit of King Saud had ended, and the Administration could afford to deviate from the pro-Arab line it had demonstrated towards a more balanced attitude. Another factor was the growing disappointment with Hammarskjöld, who had not succeeded in making good use of his status and authority as U.N. secretary-general to achieve a solution to the crisis in the Middle East.

The turning point came on 11 February, in a meeting between Eban and Shiloah and Dulles and his staff. For the first time, Dulles proposed a solution to the issue of guarantees: the United States would declare its commitment to freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, would even exercise its navigation rights there and would call on other maritime nations to follow suit. As for the Gaza Strip — the United States insisted on an unconditional withdrawal by Israel, according to the Assembly's resolution, and on a U.N. force entering the Strip. The proposals were handed to Eban in the form of a State Department aide mémoire.[79]

Further to this talk there was a discussion with Robert Murphy, Dulles' deputy for political affairs. Murphy made it clear to Eban that the key element of the guarantees

77 See no. 382, note 2.

78 See no. 390.

79 See nos. 403, 404.

was the certainty that the maritime nations would exercise and defend their own navigation rights; to be on the safe side, a U.N. force would also be stationed in the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf. The United States believed that its declaration would make the Gulf in fact an international waterway. Once agreement had been reached with Dulles on the basis of this aide mémoire, the United States would arrange matters in the United Nations and with Hammarskjöld.[80]

Coincidentally, on 11 February the Soviet Union approached the three Western powers and proposed to them (as a counter-measure to the Eisenhower Doctrine) to formulate a joint plan for ensuring peace in the Middle East, based on the following principles: settling disagreements peacefully; non-interference in the internal matters of countries in the region; refraining from dragging them into military alliances; removal of military bases and evacuation of foreign forces; cutting off the supply of arms to countries in the region; assisting the economic development of these countries without political preconditions. In effect this plan merely recycled previous proposals made to the West and rejected.

At this point it seemed as if the subject of sanctions had been removed from the agenda. Even Hammarskjöld, in a report submitted to the Assembly on 11 February, expressed his reservations about the proposal, both from the legal aspect and in terms of its wisdom and usefulness.[81] Eban, after the bitter struggle with Hammarskjöld, finally saw the possibility of a solution favourable to Israel and thought that Ben-Gurion should welcome the American initiative. He urged the latter to accept Dulles' offer promptly, despite Israel's reservations, and warned that rejection would cause Israel to lose sympathy and the chance to obtain guarantees from the United States. Ben-Gurion remarked in his diary that Eban saw this proposal as a fundamental turning-point and almost as salvation, and tried to cool his enthusiasm, responding that Dulles' proposal did indeed contain a basis for a favourable solution, but Israel could not accept it in its present form.[82]

Eban did not give up, and in a series of daily telegrams he continued to stress the significance of the proposals, which he saw as a serious guarantee on the part of the United States. In order not to miss this opportunity, he pressured Ben-Gurion at least to accept the proposal in principle, and only then to begin discussions about alterations and amendments. Shiloah too thought that the Dulles proposal was a basic turning point in the Administration's policy and should be taken up at once, before Eisenhower changed his mind.[83]

Ben-Gurion summoned the government for an extraordinary meeting on 14 February to discuss the American proposals. The government welcomed the positive

[80] See no. 403.

[81] See no. 407, note 2.

[82] See no. 407, note 6; no. 408.

[83] See nos. 409, 414 and 415.

attitude of the United States to the issue of the Gulf of Aqaba, but proposed that in order to prevent a renewed blockade there, U.N. forces be stationed along the coast to ensure freedom of navigation, or else that Israel be given effective guarantees, as suggested by Dulles. As for the future of the Gaza Strip and a solution to the refugee issue, it was proposed to hold clandestine talks with U.S. representatives in order to seek an appropriate arrangement that could be submitted to the United Nations. As for the armistice agreement, in the opinion of the government, there was no going back to the *status quo ante* or relying on an agreement which Egypt had already made null and void. At the same time, the Israeli government stated that Israel did not demand belligerency rights for itself in respect of Egypt, and that it pledged to abstain from any acts of belligerency against it, on a reciprocal basis.

Ben-Gurion sent Meir the main points of these decisions, which were to serve as a basis for the reply to Dulles. In fact, behind all the praise to the United States for its involvement and behind Israel's acceptance in principle of Dulles' proposals lurked the demand for further clarifications.[84] Ben-Gurion presented the government's decision to Lawson in the same way. Lawson drew his attention to the positive points in the State Department's aide mémoire and to the heavy moral responsibility that the United States was undertaking.[85]

The government's aide mémoire was sent the next day to the State Department, and was promptly discussed in detail (the first of three continuous discussions) by Dulles and his aides, together with Eban and Shiloah. Dulles immediately noted Israel's objections to his proposals and expressed his disappointment. He claimed that Israel was in no position to conduct bilateral negotiations with the United States instead of acting in cooperation with the United Nations. Dulles demanded that his proposals be accepted, and commented that the pressure in the General Assembly was mounting, and that if an understanding was not reached forthwith, the argument would erupt again in full force. Eban said he would consult with the foreign minister and report to the government.[86] He summarised his impression of the state of affairs (which he defined as "most delicate") in a telegram to Ben-Gurion: Dulles had reached the end of his tether and could make no further or different proposals; Israel did not have much leeway; if it failed to accept Dulles' proposals, the United States would abandon its initiative and leave matters in the hands of the United Nations.[87]

But unlike Eban, Ben-Gurion stood firm. In reply to Eban's persistent telegrams, Ben-Gurion enumerated the positive and negative points in the American proposal. He added that Israel would announce that its existence and security required that it

84 See no. 418.
85 See no. 419.
86 See no. 422.
87 See no. 425.

evacuate the Gulf only after receipt of effective guarantees of freedom of navigation and the establishment of a joint administration of Gaza by Israel, local residents and the United Nations; Israel would not alter its position even if threatened and punished with sanctions.[88]

In the second talk with Dulles, on 17 February, he reiterated that the United States considered Israel's response a rejection. The United States could not give Israel explicit guarantees of freedom of navigation, because this would entail obtaining the approval of Congress. Dulles suggested that Israel reconsider and accept his offer, and stressed that should Egypt again impose a blockade on Israeli shipping, the responsibility would lie with the United States. Eban responded that Israel had had its share of disappointments and had learned to beware of promises not backed up by guarantees.[89]

The third talk took place that same day amid an atmosphere of crisis. Eban conveyed the prime minister's reply to the American proposal and his conclusion that the plan did not guarantee freedom of navigation and would not prevent renewed Egyptian aggression. He added that making freedom of navigation contingent on the evacuation of the Gaza Strip cancelled the American pledge, since Israel would not allow Egypt to return to the Strip. Dulles asked whether Israel would accept the plan if the two issues were separated, and Eban replied that he was not authorised to exceed the limits of his instructions. Dulles expressed regret and disappointment over Israel's response, claimed that a serious opportunity for cooperation had been missed, and warned that an era full of obstacles was beginning, one which would harm relations between the two countries.[90]

As the day wore on, a tense exchange of telegrams ensued between the United States and Israel. Meir warned Ben-Gurion that the United States saw solving the crisis in the Middle East as a priority vital to its policy and that it might be ready to take drastic steps against Israel. The president asked that a delegation of Jewish dignitaries (some of whom were not Zionists) meet with Dulles, apparently in an attempt to undermine the united Jewish front in the United States and to bring pressure to bear on Israel.[91] Despite the tension, Meir argued that Israel should not withdraw on the basis of Dulles' proposals, especially not under the pressure of the debate in the General Assembly. She suggested that Eban leave for Israel immediately and expressed willingness to go herself. Meir thought that the

88 See no. 426.

89 See no. 427.

90 See no. 428.

91 The meeting did in fact take place on 21 February in the State Department, but the foreign minister briefed the participants beforehand and at the same time the Conference of Presidents launched a vigorous protest campaign. Thus the result — increased solidarity of the American Jews with Israel — was the opposite of that expected by the president.

government should defer a final decision until Ben-Gurion had heard Eban, even though she did not subscribe to his views.[92] Eban on his part continued his unceasing efforts to convince the prime minister to accept Dulles' proposals and avoid a crisis with the United States and the United Nations.[93]

France proved once again that it stood by Israel. In a talk which Meir and Eban held with Pineau in New York, the latter supported Israel's reply to Dulles. It was agreed that Pineau would instruct the French ambassador in Washington to tell the State Department that the European states would not agree to sanctions against Israel, even if such a resolution were passed in the Assembly. Pineau would also meet with Spaak in Paris in order to organise a broad front of Western countries for that end. In addition, France offered Israel a large loan to help it in the case of sanctions.[94]

On 17 February, alongside the publication of the proposals in the State Department's aide mémoire, Eisenhower issued a presidential statement saying that the United States recognised that Israel had legitimate claims against Egypt and that a solution should be found; that the proposals made by the State Department reflected the intentions of the United States both as a member of the United Nations and as a maritime power with rights; and that the United States believed that the step taken by the United Nations in its resolution of 2 February, the declarations to be made by the maritime powers and the aide mémoire of the State Department provided Israel with the best guarantees it could expect in this regard.[95]

Israel's reaction to the statement arrived on the following day. After an urgent government meeting, where Ben-Gurion's suggestions for a solution to the points in dispute between Israel and the United States were approved once again,[96] Lawson was summoned to Jerusalem to see the prime minister. Ben-Gurion wished to clarify Israel's response and to try and bridge the widening gap between the two countries on issues vital to Israel. For this purpose he relayed an urgent message to Dulles, asking him to prevent the rift between the United States and Israel. He also proposed that a committee of representatives of neutral countries be sent out to review the situation in the Gaza Strip and propose solutions.[97]

In reaction to the publication of the State Department's aide mémoire, Israel published its response to Dulles' proposals, and the Foreign Ministry spokesman stated that the U.S. proposals failed to solve the basic problems: ensuring freedom

92 See no. 429.
93 See no. 430.
94 See no. 431.
95 See Editorial Note no. 434.
96 *Ibid.*
97 See no. 436.

of navigation once the Israeli forces pulled out of the Gulf of Aqaba and preventing the Gaza Strip from again becoming a base for Fedaiyun attacks on Israel.[98]

In New York, Eban tried yet another way of influencing the secretary of state. On 19 February he met with Arthur Dean, a Washington attorney close to Dulles, to try and persuade Dulles to make his proposals more flexible. Dean conveyed the message to Dulles, and the latter replied that the president was willing to accept amendments or interpretations of the aide mémoire if they were not contrary to its spirit, but only on the assumption that if he did so, Israel and the United States would reach a final arrangement.[99]

On that day, before Eban left for Israel, the Israeli mission in New York held a final discussion of Dulles' proposals at his request. The conclusions were as follows:

1) that Israel must announce its consent to evacuate Sharm el-Sheikh and the Gulf of Aqaba, based on the statement made by the United States and the other maritime powers that the Gulf was an international waterway. Israel, too, would have the right to declare that it would retaliate against any assault on its freedom of navigation according to article 51 of the U.N. Charter (the right to self defence);
2) that the solution proposed for Gaza in the State Department's aide mémoire was not acceptable, but the matter should be discussed further with the United States, because the positive aspects of Dulles' proposals outweighed the negative.

The foreign minister approved these conclusions, and Eban took this summary with him to Israel to present at the government meeting.[100]

Meanwhile, pressure from the United States continued to mount: the chancellor of West Germany, Konrad Adenauer, was asked to exert his influence on the Israeli government and to persuade it not to insist on its position but rather to agree to the arrangement proposed by Dulles. Adenauer said that the matter did not concern Germany and refused to get involved. He even told the State Department that if the United Nations decided to impose sanctions, Germany would not join them, because the reparations agreement was not part of ordinary trade relations, but was rather a moral and political contract which Germany was committed to fulfill and would do so under all circumstances.[101]

98 See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Israel missions abroad, Circ. Tel. 832, 18 February 1957, 130.02/2377/5.

99 See no. 440.

100 The document has no title, but Gideon Rafael wrote on it "Summary agreed with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to be taken by Eban for consultation in Israel," 19 February 1957, 130.02/2448/6.

101 See no. 443. But despite Germany's firm stand on Israel's side, there was no progress on the issue of establishing relations between the two countries. See no. 291; no. 523.

Direct presidential pressure on Israel also reached its climax at that time. Eisenhower's statement of 17 February was the first in a series of moves which seemed to be leading to direct confrontation. On 20 February, as opposition in Congress to his attitude towards Israel increased, Eisenhower summoned 26 leaders of the two parties in Congress to discuss whether the United States should support a proposal to impose sanctions on Israel, should the latter stand fast in its refusal to withdraw. In this meeting, the leaders of both parties — Senators William Knowland and Lyndon Johnson — expressed forceful objection to any threat of sanctions. Most of the other senators who attended also disagreed with the president and refused to give public support to his stand.[102]

Disappointed with the failure of his efforts to enlist Congress on his side, Eisenhower decided to ignore the views of the leaders of the Senate and to address the nation directly in a radio and television broadcast. Before speaking he dispatched an urgent message to Ben-Gurion by telephone, and asked for an immediate answer, in the hope that this answer would enable him to tone down his intended speech. This message was extremely harsh in nature and contained an explicit threat of sanctions. Ben-Gurion sent back a laconic reply that he must delay any decision until he had received Eban's reports and until the Israeli government had reached a decision.[103]

Eisenhower's address to the nation, broadcast that evening (20 February), was even harsher than his message to Ben-Gurion. He presented the problem in the Middle East as a problem of U.S. national security, and in order to solve it he threw his own prestige and that of the United States into the balance. With reference to freedom of navigation, he said that it was not likely that once Israel retreated Egypt would revert to its earlier aggressive acts. If Egypt violated the armistice agreement or other international obligations, this should be dealt with firmly by the society of nations. As for Israel's obligation to comply with U.N. resolutions, he was even more explicit and scolded Israel for its demand for guarantees. The president concluded his address with a forceful expression of support for the United Nations and its role in peacekeeping.[104]

On 21 February the government convened for a session attended by Eban, who had meanwhile arrived in Israel. Before the meeting, Meir dispatched an urgent telegram to Ben-Gurion, suggesting that as well as stressing the points vital to Israel, the government decision should include an expression of appreciation to the United States and emphasise that its proposals contained a basis for a solution.[105]

102 See Editorial Note no. 446.

103 See nos. 447, 448.

104 See Editorial Note no. 446.

105 See no. 451.

At the same time, Shiloah sent Ben-Gurion a message relayed by Walter Bedell Smith (a former undersecretary of state who was close to the president), at the request of Eisenhower and Dulles. The message said that Dulles' proposals contained a U.S. commitment to Israel, and therefore Bedell Smith implored the prime minister to show flexibility and accept them.[106]

Eban expressed a similar opinion in the government meeting, saying that failure to reach an understanding with the United States would bring grave dangers on Israel. He recommended making every possible effort to reach an arrangement in the spirit of the recommendations from the mission in New York, which he presented to the meeting.

The marathon discussion by the government lasted for three sessions throughout the day (21 February) and into the small hours. Despite Eban's recommendations the government did not change its stand as expressed in its earlier decisions (of 22 January), but it did make a change on the Gaza issue: Israel's demand for continued responsibility for security in Gaza was deleted, to be replaced by an emphasis on its willingness to work on a solution in cooperation with a U.N. investigative committee which should come to the region.[107] In a break between the second and the third sessions, Ben-Gurion went to the Knesset to deliver the government's decisions, which were included in the political speech he made in the plenum. At the end of his speech Ben-Gurion spoke of the American pressure on Israel, but said that he believed that the government's resolutions — which Eban would bring back to Washington — provided hope for a solution to the disagreement between the two countries.[108]

The purpose of this speech, as before, was to present Israel's position to the United Nations and to world public opinion before the General Assembly convened. Israel's ambassadors in Europe took similar preparatory steps, holding talks with heads of state and foreign ministers to discover their position in view of the expected proposal of sanctions at the Assembly. In a talk with Macmillan, Elath once again raised Israel's requests concerning guarantees and sanctions, but Macmillan refused to commit himself as to whether Britain would join the United States and other maritime nations in guaranteeing Israel's freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba.[109]

Mollet and Pineau, on the other hand, told Tsur that France supported Israel's stand both on the issue of Gaza and on the Gulf, and it would be prepared to join a statement the maritime nations and to test the existence of free navigation

106 See no. 453.

107 See Herzog to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tel. 493, 22 February 1957, 130.02/2459/15.

108 See Editorial Note no. 452.

109 See no. 454.

forthwith. Neither rescinded their promise to grant Israel a loan or credit in the case of sanctions, despite France's difficult financial situation.[110]

From Rome, Ambassador Eliahu Sasson reported that Italy supported Israel's proposal to set up a neutral investigation committee, and that it would join the statement by the maritime nations and also support the stationing of a U.N. force along the Gulf.[111]

Daniel Lewin, the director of the Asian and African division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reported from New York on rifts in the Afro-Asian bloc and commented that Israel's friends in the bloc opposed the proposal to condemn Israel and threaten it with sanctions.[112]

After repeated postponements, the U.N. General Assembly convened on 22 February. The topics on the agenda were a report on UNEF activities in Sinai and the secretary-general's report on compliance with the General Assembly's resolutions of 2 February. The threat of sanctions, which had been hanging over Israel's head since the Assembly's January session, once again became a real possibility with the Arab-Muslim proposal on the subject. This proposal was tabled by six countries (Afghanistan, Indonesia, Lebanon, Sudan, Iraq and Pakistan). Most members of the Afro-Asian bloc did not join this initiative. The proposal called upon U.N. members to condemn Israel for not complying with the Assembly's resolutions, to withhold from it any assistance or economic, financial and military services and to report to the secretary-general on the execution of this resolution. A group of western countries, headed by Canada, attempted to draft a counter proposal less hard on Israel. In the end the Arab-Muslim proposal was not put to a vote that day, the White House spokesman announcing that the United States would not decide on this issue before another meeting between Dulles and Eban, on the latter's return from Israel. Continuation of the debate was therefore postponed till 26 February.[113]

In anticipation of this talk with Dulles, Ben-Gurion instructed Eban first to present the government's position, then to specify the arrangements required to ensure free navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. Ben-Gurion stressed that any agreement including these arrangements would be acceptable to the Israeli government, even without the stationing of a U.N. force along the coast of the Gulf until the achievement of peace with Egypt.[114]

110 See no. 458.

111 See no. 455.

112 See no. 461.

113 See Editorial Note no. 462.

114 See no. 466.

6) Completing the negotiations with the United States, with the aid of France (24–28 February 1957)

Immediately upon his return to the United States, Eban held a series of meetings. On 25 February he met Hammarskjöld twice to discuss the role of UNEF in the Gulf and Egypt's status in the Gaza Strip. The secretary-general insisted on Egypt's legal rights in the Strip according to the armistice agreement, and could not accept a practical arrangement that would prevent Egypt from returning.[115]

On the same day Eban met with Dulles and presented Israel's amended demands on the issues of freedom of navigation and Gaza. As for the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba, he informed Dulles that Israel accepted his proposal but demanded that UNEF, which was to be stationed there instead of the IDF, should be withdrawn from there only with the consent of the General Assembly.

Dulles defined the plan as constructive and, after consulting with his staff, presented his comments on the points enumerated by Eban, and accepted Israel's proposal to dispatch a neutral investigation committee to Gaza on behalf of the United Nations. In conclusion, it was decided that Israel would prepare an aide mémoire containing all the points agreed upon, that the United States would try to defer the continuation of the debate in the Assembly and that both parties would endeavour to conclude the discussions as speedily as possible.[116]

However, it seems that Eban, in his eagerness for a successful conclusion of the negotiations with Dulles, exceeded the mandate given him on the issue of Gaza, and agreed to the entry of UNEF to the Gaza Strip as well. When Ben-Gurion received the report on this talk, he reprimanded Eban severely for his "catastrophic mistake," pointing out to him that the government's decisions which he received spoke only of the non-return of Egypt to Gaza, and of sending a U.N. investigation committee there. Ben-Gurion instructed Eban to inform Dulles that there had been "an unfortunate misunderstanding" and that the government's instructions had in fact been to propose separating the Gaza issue and that of freedom of navigation in the Gulf.[117]

Eban replied that if he had excluded the possibility of UNEF entry into the Strip in his conversation with Dulles, the talks would have reached a complete impasse. In his view, this issue was included in the conclusions formulated by the Israeli mission prior to his departure for Israel and approved by the foreign minister. Meir, on her part, confirmed that there was no chance of reaching a settlement on the Gaza issue without consenting to the presence of UNEF there.[118] On the following

115 See nos. 468, 469.

116 See no. 470.

117 See no. 471.

118 See nos. 472, 473.

day Eban wrote a personal letter to Ben-Gurion, saying that the reprimand had hurt him deeply. Eban resented the criticism levelled at him after four long months during which he had fought a vital war for Israel's freedom of navigation and safe borders and tried to mend fences with the United States and influence world public opinion. If he had made a "catastrophic" mistake, the government should be given the chance to draw its own conclusions about him.[119] After the full minutes of the talk with Dulles arrived, it turned out that Eban's words had been misconstrued. The minutes provided a more positive impression than the initial report, and Ben-Gurion apologised for his harsh remark to Eban.[120]

But in a further talk with Dulles that day, it emerged that the secretary objected to separating the issues of the Gulf and the Strip and still maintained that efforts must be made to solve all outstanding issues concurrently. In this talk, he mentioned for the first time a plan which Pineau had proposed in a meeting with the president, Dulles and Mollet, and which the four of them thought might lead to a solution. He suggested that the Israelis meet with Pineau and hear his ideas, though he refused to disclose their nature.[121]

Eban met with Pineau on 27 February and heard the main points of his plan: initially UNEF would assume full authority in Gaza. Until a peace agreement with Egypt was reached there would be a civil administration in the Strip run by the United Nations exclusively, by means of its agencies. If in the period between the IDF's withdrawal and UNEF's taking control Egypt caused riots in the Strip, Israel would be permitted to act to ensure its rights, after having proclaimed that it was withdrawing its forces only on the basis of this plan. The United States, France, Britain and other countries would confirm in the General Assembly Israel's right to cancel its withdrawal if these stages were not carried out. A final settlement on Gaza would be reached as part of a peace treaty or a special agreement between the parties.[122]

In fact, and as it later became clear, the Pineau plan was essentially the Dulles plan. Dulles composed the aide mémoire on Gaza and presented it to Pineau, assuring him that this was the only way to solve the issue of the Strip. But Dulles refrained from fully disclosing the U.S. intent to recognise Egypt's sovereignty in the Strip, and thus persuaded Pineau to present the plan as his own. Pineau only demanded that mention of the armistice agreement be removed from the document, and this was done.[123]

119 See no. 475.
120 See no. 476.
121 See no. 478.
122 See no. 481.
123 *Ibid.*, note 2.

After the meeting with Pineau, Eban promptly recommended accepting his plan, which was approved by Dulles. Meir, who had returned to New York, supported Eban, saying that if Israel rejected the French plan it would be totally isolated in the United Nations. The major advantage of the plan was that it did not require a U.N. resolution and that it relied on statements made by friendly countries (similar to the solution proposed on the issue of freedom of navigation).[124]

The government met for an extraordinary session on 27 February and agreed in principle to the Pineau plan, but requested additional clarifications about the prevention of Egypt's return to the Strip. Their agreement was also conditional on assurances of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and removal of any reference to the armistice agreement.[125]

Time was running out, and Dulles told Eban and Meir that he could no longer delay the convening of the General Assembly. On 28 February the decisive discussions took place in Washington and in Jerusalem. In the State Department, two consecutive discussions took place, with Dulles attending the second, in order to arrive at an agreed draft of the statement to be made by Meir at the U.N. Assembly on Israel's final withdrawal. In the final text, which the Americans went over and approved word by word, the statement on freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba was based on the assumptions and wording that had been discussed with the United States since 11 February. The section on Gaza was taken in its entirety from the amended Pineau proposal. At the end of the discussion Dulles said that Lodge would declare in the Assembly that the United States supported the assumptions and hopes expressed by Meir. Eban asked to see the draft of Lodge's speech but Dulles claimed there was no written draft yet and gave him the main points orally.[126]

The extraordinary government session that took place that day approved the agreement with the United States and the order of speeches at the General Assembly as determined in the meeting at the State Department: the statement by the foreign minister, Lodge's statement, and statements from the supporting countries, without a vote. To be on the safe side, and in order to receive one last assurance that Egypt would not return to Gaza, Eban had one more talk with Dulles that day. Dulles asked him to convey to the Israeli government that U.S. policy was that the United Nations would govern Gaza until a final settlement was reached.[127] However, matters in the General Assembly were to take an entirely different course.

124 See no. 482.

125 See no. 484.

126 See Editorial Note no. 490.

127 See no. 491.

7) Israel's announcement on withdrawal; the dispute with the United States on its commitment to its pledges (1–20 March 1957)

The Israeli minister of foreign affairs opened the session of the General Assembly on 1 March with an announcement on Israel's withdrawal from the Gulf of Aqaba and from Gaza. She described Israel's assumptions and expectations regarding guarantees for freedom of navigation in the Gulf, UNEF remaining there and the establishment of exclusive U.N. rule in Gaza until the achievement of a final settlement. The next speaker to address the Assembly was Lodge, who was expected merely to support and confirm Meir's statements. He made a statement on the Gulf and freedom of navigation as agreed with the State Department, but on the issue of Gaza he made an unexpected change and spoke of Egypt's rights in the Strip as based on the armistice agreement, even quoting the last report submitted by Hammarskjöld to the Assembly on 24 January.

After Lodge the representatives of several other nations spoke, expressing their support for Israel's statement as agreed. Eban and Meir, who were stunned, could do nothing further at the Assembly, but as soon as it was over Eban telephoned Dulles, protested vehemently about Lodge's deviation from the points agreed and said that a thorough inquiry was needed.[128] However, Dulles expressed satisfaction with the proceedings at the Assembly and said that Lodge had asked his permission to insert a few "small" changes in his speech to ensure that Hammarskjöld would not interfere with the plan. He stressed yet again that U.S. policy was to support total freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and international rule of Gaza, and expressed his willingness to meet Eban to discuss the situation.[129]

On the following day an extraordinary government meeting was held — the first in the history of Israel to take place on a Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. This session, and the following two, were conducted under the shadow of a two-fold crisis: on the one hand, the high tension with the United States following Lodge's speech at the Assembly, which Israel considered a breach of trust; and on the other hand a crisis within the coalition due to the opposition of ministers from the Achdut Ha'Avoda and Mapam parties to withdrawal under the new circumstances. At the end of the deliberations, it was decided to demand from the United States an unequivocal statement that Egypt would not be allowed to return to the Gaza Strip and recognition of Israel's right to self defence both in the Gulf and in Gaza.

128 On the same day, before the statements at the Assembly, Dulles informed the representatives of nine Arab countries that there was no secret agreement between Israel and the United States, nor concessions or secret promises. See *The Political Battle*, p. 288.

129 See no. 495.

Israel should demand that all details of the agreement with the United States be confirmed in writing, either in a letter from the president to the prime minister or in a written agreement signed by both parties.[130]

That same day Eban and Shiloah met with Dulles, who once again claimed that the deviation from the agreement in Lodge's speech was not significant and promised that the United States supported the principles expressed in Meir's speech. In order to set things right the president would give his word, in writing, to Ben-Gurion.[131] Eisenhower promptly sent a message to the prime minister, praising Israel on its decision to withdraw and promising that it would have no cause to regret it.[132] Bedell Smith, who — at Shiloah's request — also approached Eisenhower on the subject of Lodge's speech, received a similar answer, that there had been no last-minute change in U.S. policy.[133]

In light of these promises, Eban sent a telegram to Ben-Gurion, calling Israel's situation "an achievement," particularly after the president's message. He pointed out the improvement in the country's status in all important respects, including in Congress and public opinion. Therefore he urged Ben-Gurion to annouce as soon as possible that the withdrawal was being put into action according to Meir's statement, and to place responsibility for the future on Eisenhower, in view of the pledge made in his message. Eban believed that the determining factor in Israel's decision should be not only finding solutions for practical security problems but also preserving relations with the United States and France, on which the country's security was dependent.[134]

In the government session of 3 March several proposals were considered, and Ben-Gurion's was finally accepted, namely, to consent to the withdrawal and comply with the president's message. Though the threat to the coalition remained, the government decided to instruct the IDF Chief of Staff to meet General Burns and prepare an agreed timetable for the withdrawal.[135]

Eban continued to try to obtain a written commitment from Dulles regarding Israel's right to self defence in the Gulf and in Gaza. Dulles refused, claiming that a commitment for an exchange of letters regarding the Gulf already existed, and as for Gaza — the president's message amended Lodge's statement at the General Assembly.[136]

On 4 March Dayan and Burns met to determine withdrawal procedures, and at the same time the Foreign Ministry spokesman announced that Israel would return

[130] See no. 496.
[131] See no. 497.
[132] See no. 498.
[133] See no. 499.
[134] See no. 500.
[135] See Editorial Note no. 502.
[136] See no. 504.

to Gaza if Egypt tried to send troops into the Strip. On the same day Meir informed the General Assembly of the arrangements, thus confirming her statement of 1 March. Following her announcement, 12 more countries announced their support for Israel's declaration.

However, on the next day Israel suffered two disappointments. In a press conference, Dulles denied that the United States had made any secret commitment to Israel and claimed that Lodge's statement reflected U.S. policy on the Gaza Strip. He again confirmed the principle of freedom of navigation in the Gulf, but denied that the United States had any plan to send a ship to Eilat in the foreseeable future. In a telegram to Ben-Gurion, Meir expressed disappointment with Dulles' statements and doubts about his credibility.[137]

On the same day, Eytan asked Pineau to confirm that the French initiative concerning Gaza had been his own, but Pineau refused to do so and stated that even if France had played a part in achieving the compromise, the final form which the United States had given it was very far from what he had been led to believe by Dulles. Pineau was prepared only to confirm his own (pro-Israeli) interpretation of the Gaza section in Meir's announcement of the withdrawal.[138]

On 5 March Ben-Gurion again appeared before the Knesset and explained Israel's motives for going through with the withdrawal as planned. No resolution proposed by the government was put to the vote for fear that the coalition would fall apart. However, three no-confidence motions were defeated by a large majority, thus providing an indirect confirmation of the government's statement.[139]

In his reply to Eisenhower's message (on 7 March), Ben-Gurion stressed that Israel was withdrawing from the Gulf of Aqaba and Gaza, despite its misgivings, because it relied on the U.S. commitment as expressed in the president's pledges.[140]

Gaza was evacuated on 7 March and handed over to the United Nations. On the following day Sharm el-Sheikh was handed over to UNEF which completed its deployment along the Gulf of Aqaba by 12 March. Thus Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai was completed. Hammarskjöld reported to the U.N. Assembly on Israel's complete withdrawal, the Assembly closed its session and charged the secretary-general with acting for peace in the Middle East.[141]

However, within a few days the U.S. commitment to Israel was already put to the test: following violent mass demonstrations in the Gaza Strip on 10 March, including calls to bring back Egyptian rule, UNEF troops opened fire on the crowds, and a curfew was imposed. Egypt immediately accused UNEF of exceeding its

[137] See no. 514.

[138] See no. 512.

[139] See *Divrei HaKnesset* (Knesset Reports), Vol. XXII, 1957, pp. 1233–1281.

[140] See no. 520.

[141] See Editorial Note no. 526.

authority and announced that it was renewing its control of the Gaza Strip and appointing Major General Hassan 'Abd al-Latif as its admistrative governor. On 14 March the governor and his men arrived in Gaza.

Israel, seeing its worst fears fulfilled sooner than it expected, embarked on a series of urgent measures to test the reliability of the promises it had been given. On 13 March Ben-Gurion dispatched a message to Eisenhower, claiming that, in its actions in the Strip, Egypt was violating the understanding between Israel and the United States. He asked the president to intervene so that Israel would not have to exercise its right to self defence. Eisenhower replied that the United States remained steadfast in its hopes and assumptions concerning the Middle East, and called on Israel to refrain from hasty action.[142]

Eban, Shiloah and Kidron met the heads of the State Department (Herter, Rountree and Murphy) and demanded that the United States act to fulfil its pledge to Israel.[143] Eban also spoke with Hammarskjöld, who was about to depart for Cairo, about the role of UNEF in the new situation in the Gaza Strip; but Ben-Gurion told Meir that there was no point in further appeals to the secretary-general before the latter received commitments from Egypt.[144]

Meir met in Paris with Mollet, who was furious with Dulles for having misled him, as well as with Louis Joxe, the secretary-general of the French Foreign Ministry, and with Bourgès-Maunoury, who promised that France would support Israel if it was forced to act against Egypt.[145] Continuing on to Washington, Meir met on 18 March with Dulles for a decisive meeting to find out whether the United States was willing to carry out its promises and what steps it would take to do so. The other aim of Meir's visit was to arouse public opinion against Nasser's provocation and prepare it for the possibility that Israel might have to exercise its right to self defence. At the end of the meeting a joint statement was issued, confirming Israel's and the U.S. common policy on three issues: Gaza, the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal. This statement was more explicit in its wording than previous American statements concerning the U.N.'s responsibilities in Gaza.[146]

In the end Israel made do with the warning campaign it had conducted and the more explicit promises received from the United States and did not take military action against Egypt in the Gaza Strip, mainly because Egypt made no further moves after appointing the governor. In fact, this had been Ben-Gurion's original decision, and already in a meeting with Dayan on 15 March he had said that he had no intention of responding with force if Egypt entered Gaza; however he would

142 See nos. 538, 549.

143 See no. 534, 539.

144 See nos. 548, 554.

145 See no. 552.

146 See no. 562.

respond with full severity to any attempt by Egypt to interfere with navigation through the Straits of Tiran and in the Gulf.[147]

The events of the next ten years seemed to show that Ben-Gurion's decision not to use force was justified. These were years of peace which Israel used for bringing in new immigrants, developing its economy after the opening of the trade route to Asia via the Red Sea and military development, supported by France. When Nasser once again blocked the Straits of Tiran and expelled the U.N. forces from Sinai and Gaza in 1967, President Johnson recognised the commitment given by his predecessors, and recognised the Egyptian blockade and the infringement on Israel's freedom of navigation as a *casus belli*, giving Israel the right to self defence.[148]

Nana Sagi

147 See no. 538, note 1.

148 See M. Oren, "The Second War of Independence," *Azure*, 27 (2007), pp. 41-48.

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72. *Record Group: Personal Archives*
   72.02 — Teddy Kollek
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93. *Record Group: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel's Missions Abroad*
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   93.03 — New York (Israel's mission to the U.N. and the consulate-general in New York)
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   130.15 — Middle East Division
   130.16 — Cease-fire Division
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The National Archives of the U.K. (Public Record Office) (TNA PRO)

FO 371 Foreign Office files, general political correspondence
PREM 11 Prime Minister's Office

Abbreviations used in Editorial Headings and References

IDF — Israel Defence Forces
Inc. — Incoming text
M.F.A. — Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Orig. — Original
Outg. — Outgoing text
Tel. — Telegram

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Plans to arouse U.S. public opinion against the Soviet Union's antisemitic policy.

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146 26 November 1956 **G. Meir to the U.N. Secretary-General**
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147 26 November 1956 **D. Hammarskjöld to G. Meir**
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148 26 November 1956 **L. Eshkol to A. Eban and M. Sherman** (telegram)
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149 26 November 1956 **Israel Ambassador in Moscow to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)
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150 26 November 1956 **W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad** (telegram)
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Israel's acts of destruction and mine-laying in Sinai constitute a violation of the U.N. General Assembly's resolution.

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197 7 December 1956 **A. Eban to the United States Division** (telegram)
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199 8 December 1956 **J. Herzog to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations** (telegram)
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243 26 December 1956 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
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244 26 December 1956 **J. Herzog to A. Eban** (telegram)
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245 26 December 1956 **Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Israel Missions Abroad**
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250 27 December 1956 **M. Tov to W. Eytan**
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251 28 December 1956 **W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad** (telegram)
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252 28 December 1956 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
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253 28 December 1956 **E. Elath to the British Commonwealth Division** (telegram)
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265	2 January 1957	**S. Levin to W. Eytan** Summary of talks with officials in the Burmese government: the government will not take any initiative to table proposals for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict at the United Nations, but may join initiatives tabled by another country.
266	2 January 1957	**E. Dobkin to J. Tsur** Immigration to Israel from North Africa, Poland, Hungary and Egypt; the need to raise funds for caring for the immigrants.
267	3 January 1957	**J. Herzog to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations** (telegram) Messages from Burns to Dayan on the scope of the withdrawal in Sinai and Israel's pledge to stop destruction there.
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269	4 January 1957	**Meeting: Chief of Staff M. Dayan — Major-General E. L. M. Burns** Continued withdrawal of the IDF in Sinai; exchange of prisoners of war.
270	4 January 1957	**M. Kidron to J. Herzog** (telegram) Meeting with Cordier: his impressions from his meeting with Nasser; the treatment of the Egyptian Jews; the role of UNEF; navigation through the Suez Canal.
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286	8 January 1957	**M. Kidron to J. Herzog** (telegram) Meeting with Bunche: a further withdrawal in Sinai; the role of UNEF; the expulsion of the Egyptian Jews.
287	8 January 1957	**A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram) Activity among the various missions to the U.N. General Assembly on the issues of freedom of navigation and Gaza.
288	8 January 1957	**J. Herzog to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations** (telegram) The prime minister's talk with Lawson: the State Department's comments on their previous talk (3 December); economic sanctions by the United States.
289	9 January 1957	**M. Kidron to J. Herzog** (telegram) The Arab initiative to impose sanctions on Israel.
290	9 January 1957	**J. Tsur to W. Eytan and M. Bartur** (telegram) Meeting with Gazier, the acting foreign minister: French support for Israel's position, France's participation in funding the oil pipeline.
291	9 January 1957	**F. E. Shinnar to W. Eytan and the West European Division** (telegram) Efforts to interest the Federal Republic of Germany in participating in funding the oil pipeline; discussions about establishing diplomatic ties between Germany and Israel.
292	9 January 1957	**M. Tov to the Latin American Division** (telegram) The foreign minister's meeting with the heads of Latin American missions to the United Nations: freedom of navigation; participation in UNEF.
293	10 January 1957	**D. Ben-Gurion: Diary Note** The chances of sanctions being imposed on Israel; an economic contingency plan; Eli Ginzberg's letter on the atmosphere in the White House.
294	10 January 1957	**A. Eban to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Meeting with Bunche: Hammarskjöld is examining the possibility of a General Assembly resolution on freedom of navigation and the role of UNEF, influenced by some missions' support of Israel's stance; chances of the postponement of the General Assembly session.

305 13 January 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)

Meeting with Hammarskjöld: stationing UNEF in the Gulf of Aqaba; the role of the secretary-general in defining the authority of UNEF; his objections to Israel's proposals; demolition of installations in Sinai.

306 13 January 1957 **J. Herzog to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations** (telegram)

The government's decisions of 13 January: evacuation of the Gulf of Aqaba only after ensuring freedom of navigation and receiving guarantees, including navigation through the Suez Canal; Israel to remain responsible for security in the Gaza Strip with an autonomous local administration; Israel's contribution to a solution for the refugee problem; a demand for the demilitarisation of Sinai or at least the part bordering on Israel.

307 13 January 1957 **D. Ben-Gurion to A. Eban**

Israel will not withdraw from the Gulf of Aqaba until it is promised guarantees for freedom of navigation, even if by doing so it is acting in contravention of the U.N. resolution; the same goes for returning to the armistice demarcation lines.

308 13 January 1957 **J. Herzog to A. Eban** (telegram)

Instructions to Eban following the government's decision: informing the U.N. secretary-general of the completion of the withdrawal from Sinai except Sharm el-Sheikh by 22 January; submitting Israel's proposals on an agreement or guarantees for freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, free passage through the Suez Canal and the administration of Gaza.

309 13 January 1957 **P. Sapir to L. Eshkol** (telegram)

Negotiations in the United States on a loan from the Bank of America.

310 13 January 1957 **T. Kollek to the Prime Minister**

Proposals for starting a public relations campaign immediately, in view of the danger of the imposition of sanctions on Israel, which would harm the transfer of funds from the United Jewish Appeal, the Israel Development Bonds drive and reparations payments.

311 14 January 1957 **M. Kidron to J. Herzog** (telegram)

Summary of the Eban-Hammarskjöld meeting: the announcement of the completion of the IDF's withdrawal in Sinai; discussion of the issues of Sharm el-Sheik and Gaza;

stationing UNEF in Sinai and separating it from Egyptian military forces; denial of reports on further demolitions in Sinai.

312 14 January 1957 **E. Najar to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Israel Embassy in Paris** (telegram)
Meeting with Joxe and Georges-Picot: France confirms its participation in the oil pipeline, various possibilities for the route of the pipe and its diameter.

313 14 January 1957 **D. Sattath to the Israel Embassy in Moscow**
The repatriation agreement between the Soviet Union and Poland: the agreement will enable Jewish families to return to Poland and to go on to Israel.

314 15 January 1957 **M. Kidron to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Eban's meeting with Lodge: U.S. support for Israel's demand for guarantees; a proposal to include them in the U.N. secretary-general's report to be approved by the General Assembly; separating the issues of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip.

315 15 January 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Meeting with Pearson: Hammarskjöld's refusal to promise permanent stationing of UNEF in Sharm el-Sheikh; suggestions for exerting pressure on Hammarskjöld and obtaining international support for freedom of navigation.

316 15 January 1957 **J. Tsur to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division** (telegram)
Meeting between René Cassin and Lebanese Foreign Minister Malik: Malik's doubts about the chance of a permanent Arab-Israeli settlement; Lebanon's attitude to the refugee problem, Israeli withdrawal in Sinai and freedom of navigation.

317 15 January 1957 **Y. Ilsar to the Israel Ambassador in Paris**
Information about Maurice Fischer's mission to Rome to explain Israel's stand on freedom of navigation to the Vatican and to try and improve ties with the Vatican.

318 16 January 1957 **West European Division to the Israel Embassy in Paris** (telegram)
Ben-Gurion's talk with Gilbert: if sanctions are imposed on Israel, it will turn to France for assistance.

319 16 January 1957 **M. Galli to M. Sherman**
France's participation in funding the oil pipeline; different options for the diameter of the pipe.

329	19 January 1957	**Y. Shimoni to W. Eytan** (telegram) Meeting with the director-general of the Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Burma will support proposals for solutions raised by others but will not take any initiative of its own; Burma's stand on freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and on the Gaza Strip.
330	21 January 1957	**A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram) The Afro-Asian draft resolution has been moderated before the vote at the General Assembly. The West does not distinguish between freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza issue and demands that U.N. forces be sent in both cases.
331	21 January 1957	**M. Kidron to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Eban's meeting with the U.N. secretary-general: the continuation of Israel's withdrawal from Sinai; differences of opinion regarding the state of belligerency with Egypt; the status of UNEF in Sharm el-Sheikh and in Gaza; Egyptian legal rights in Gaza.
332	21 January 1957	**D. Hammarskjöld to A. Eban** The secretary-general's restrictive interpretation of the authority of UNEF.
333	22 January 1957	**G. Meir to the Prime Minister** (telegram) Pressure must be brought to bear on the U.N. secretary-general to make him define the nature of UNEF and its role; various ways of dealing with his intentions.
334	22 January 1957	**J. Herzog to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nation**s (telegram) The government's decisions: reaffirmation of its decisions of 13 January; clarification of Israel's stand to the U.N. secretary-general, U.N. delegations and world public opinion before the secretary-general's report is submitted; Israel will oppose the stationing of UNEF on its territory or its entry into the Gaza Strip.
335	22 January 1957	**R. Shiloah to J. Herzog and A. Eban** (telegram) Meeting with Murphy: a request for U.S. support for Israel's proposals on freedom of navigation and the Gaza Strip.
336	22 January 1957	**Meeting: S. Arad — W. Burdett** The Eisenhower Doctrine: economic aspects of the plan; James Richards' mission to the Middle East; the legal status of Israel-Egyptian relations.
337	22 January 1957	**G. Rafael to W. Eytan** (telegram) The possibility of the partition of Jordan; ramifications for Israel.

347 25 January 1957 **A. Eban to the U.N. Secretary-General**
The Israeli government's position on the state of belligerency between Israel and Egypt.

348 25 January 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Meeting with Pearson: in his opinion the solution to both the Gulf and the Gaza problems is deploying a U.N. force invested with authority; if Israel demands that part of Sinai be demilitarised, it must also demilitarise a small area of its territory. Canada opposes sanctions.

349 25 January 1957 **W. Eytan to A. Eban** (telegram)
Reports on Iran's stand with regard to Nasser.

350 25 January 1957 **D. Lewin to the Asian and African Division**
Meetings with representatives of members of the Afro-Asian bloc which support Israel's position and have reservations about a harsh resolution against Israel in the General Assembly.

351 **Editorial Note**
The secretary-general's report to the General Assembly (25 January 1957).

352 26 January 1957 **M. Comay to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Meeting with Pearson: his reaction to the secretary-general's report; the main points of Pearson's plan; the central role of UNEF in resolving the issues of freedom of navigation and the Gaza Strip.

353 26 January 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Meeting with Murphy: Eban's criticism of Hammarskjöld's report; Murphy believes there is no chance that sanctions will be imposed on Israel; the U.S. attitude towards the Pearson plan; the oil pipeline plans.

354 26 January 1957 **M. Alon to the West European Division** (telegram)
Meeting with Birgi: Turkey supports freedom of navigation and Israel's demands for assurances; Gaza should not be returned to Egypt; Turkey's stand will be mainly determined by that of the United States.

355 27 January 1957 **D. Hammarskjöld to A. Eban**
Reply to Eban's letter of 25 January: the legal validity of the armistice agreements must be upheld under all circumstances.

356 27 January 1957 **Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Israel Missions Abroad**
Comments on the Hammarskjöld report: the report is unfavourable and unconstructive and ignores the facts; the secretary-general seeks to restore the situation which led to the war.

357 27 January 1957 **J. Tsur to L. Eshkol and M. Bartur** (telegram)
Meeting with Ramadier: French assistance to Israel in view of the reduction of American aid and the danger of sanctions; France's dire financial situation prevents it from giving Israel a loan, but it is ready to help by supplying goods.

358 28 January 1957 **J. Tsur to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)
Meeting with Joxe: his difficult conversation with Hammarskjöld about French support for Israel and freedom of navigation; the State Department understands Israel's demands for freedom of navigation and for broadening UNEF's powers, but not for control over the administration in Gaza; oil supply from Iran to Israel.

359 28 January 1957 **F. E. Shinnar to W. Eytan**
Meeting with German Foreign Minister Brentano: the Federal Republic's positive attitude towards Israel's demands; it will not be deterred by attacks on Israel in the United Nations; his pessimism about a settlement between Israel and the Arabs; Israel's attempts to interest Germany in the oil pipeline project.

360 30 January 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
The principles of the Pearson plan for a resolution by the U.N. General Assembly; Israel's suggested amendments.

361 30 January 1957 **M. Alon to the West European Division and the Asian and African Division**
Meeting with the Iranian minister to Turkey: Iran's attitude to freedom of navigation.

362 31 January 1957 **W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad** (telegram)
The principles of the Pearson plan; instructions for approaches to the ministries for foreign affairs on the issues of the status of the armistice agreement, freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal and control of the Gaza administration.

363 31 January 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
The collapse of the Pearson plan; there is no chance of its gaining a majority; a resolution is being proposed authorising Hammarskjöld to station UNEF in the Gulf of Aqaba and in Gaza, without specifying its powers.

382 6 February 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)

The interim period achieved by postponement of the session should be used for an information campaign about Israel's stand: demanding an end to the state of belligerency with Egypt, employing UNEF to prevent a blockade and opposition to sanctions.

383 6 February 1957 **G. Meir to the Prime Minister** (telegram)

In response to rumours of a compromise decision by the government, insists that Israel must stand fast with regard to its demands and not change its position.

384 6 February 1957 **A. Salmon to A. Eban**

Meeting with Bergus: preparations for the implementation of the Eisenhower Doctrine; King Saud's visit to the United States; there is little probability of the imposition of sanctions on Israel by the United States.

385 6 February 1957 **Note from the Soviet Embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Reply to the Foreign Ministry's Note of 28 December 1956 on cancellation of oil contracts with Israel.

386 7 February 1957 **M. Sherman to L. Eshkol**

Proposals for measures to be taken in Congress to ease economic pressure on Israel and for talks in the State Department on the allocation of the funds requested for the Eisenhower Doctrine.

387 7 February 1957 **D. Lewin to the Asian and African Division**

The position of the Afro-Asian bloc during the voting at the U.N. General Assembly: the bloc's stand is not uniform and some of its members tend to support moderate proposals.

388 8 February 1957 **D. Ben-Gurion to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)

The main points of Israel's stand: ending the state of belligerency; Egypt will not return to Gaza; Israeli administration of the Gaza Strip in conjunction with the United Nations; evacuation of the Straits only after freedom of navigation is ensured; a non-aggression pact or a peace agreement instead of the armistice agreement with Egypt; Israel opposes the entry of a U.N. force into its territory.

389 8 February 1957 **M. Erell to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)

Meeting with Basil Robinson: Canada's stand on the proposal of sanctions; Hammarskjöld's handling of the crisis.

390	8 February 1957	**Message from Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower** Israel has completed its withdrawal from Sinai but Egypt has not given up the state of belligerency; the United Nations discriminates against Israel by threatening it with sanctions; justification of the demand for guarantees for freedom of navigation and stopping Fedaiyun activity; the United States and other countries should provide Israel with guarantees.
391	8 February 1957	**A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram) Demonstrations in Israel against the threat of sanctions.
392	8 February 1957	**Meeting: S. Arad — D. Bergus** The Eisenhower Doctrine, tension in U.S.-Israel relations, King Saud's visit to the United States.
393	8 February 1957	**M. Fischer to the Director of the West European Division** Different opinions in the Vatican on the attitude towards Israel.
394	9 February 1957	**W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad** (telegram) The disagreement between Israel and the U.N. secretary-general; public opinion in the United States opposes the imposition of sanctions on Israel.
395	9 February 1957	**J. Tsur to L. Eshkol and W. Eytan** (telegram) Meeting with Gazier: France will support Israel in case of sanctions, within its limitations.
396	9 February 1957	**M. Comay to the International Organizations Division** (telegram) Meetings with Labouisse and Jamieson: Israel's relations with the U.N. Relief and Works Agency; the situation of the refugees in the Gaza Strip.
397	10 February 1957	**M. Kidron to J. Herzog** (telegram) Hammarskjöld's latest talk with Eban: disagreement and tension on the issues of Egypt's replies to Israel's questions, the armistice agreement with Egypt and the Gaza Strip.
398	10 February 1957	**A. Eban to the U.N. Secretary-General** Insists on receiving answers from Egypt on the two questions put to it regarding the state of belligerency with Israel.
399	10 February 1957	**W. Eytan to the Israel Ambassy in Rome** (telegram) Ben-Gurion's talk with Italian Ambassador Capomazza: Italy's position on the evacuation of the Straits, guarantees for freedom of navigation and the Gaza Strip.

400 10 February 1957 **E. Sasson to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and W. Eytan** (telegram)
Meeting with Rossi Longhi, head of the Italian Foreign Ministry: Italy's position on sanctions, freedom of navigation and guarantees for Israel; the reasons for U.S. support of sanctions and its pressure on Israel.

401 10 February 1957 **R. Pilpoul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)
Meeting with Emperor Haile Selassie: Ethiopia will oppose sanctions against Israel; he supports Israel's stand on the Straits but also the entry of a U.N. force into Gaza; he agrees to the dissemination of anti-Egyptian propaganda in Ethiopia.

402 10 February 1957 **M. Bartur to W. Eytan**
Proposed solutions for the refugee problem in Gaza in conjunction with the United Nations.

403 11 February 1957 **R. Shiloah to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Dulles' talk with Eban: his proposal for a guarantee — a statement by the United States on its commitment to freedom of navigation, which other countries would join; Murphy's talk with Eban: the significance of an American commitment to freedom of navigation; the United States insists on an Israeli pull-out from Gaza and the entry of UNEF.

404 11 February 1957 **Aide Mémoire from the Department of State to the Israel Embassy in Washington**
In order to ensure freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, the United States will exercise its navigation rights there and will call upon other countries to follow suit; calls on Israel to withdraw according to the U.N. Assembly's resolutions.

405 11 February 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Collapse of the threat of sanctions; the meaning of the U.S. commitment to freedom of navigation.

406 11 February 1957 **M. Comay to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Pearson's talk with Meir: the American proposal for a solution to the issue of freedom of navigation; Canada supports Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the entry of UNEF.

407 12 February 1957 **A. Eban to D. Ben-Gurion** (telegram)
The background to the Dulles plan; analysis of the proposals; considers them a breakthrough and a victory for Israel and strongly recommends accepting them.

408 12 February 1957 **D. Ben-Gurion to A. Eban** (telegram)
The Dulles plan shows a desire for a positive solution, but Israel cannot accept the proposal as it stands.

409 12 February 1957 **A. Eban to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)
Clarification of the American proposals: the concept of "innocent" passage, freedom of navigation, the Gulf of Aqaba as an international waterway, the issue of the armistice agreement. Eban presses for acceptance of the proposals while insisting on amendations, so as not to miss this opportunity.

410 12 February 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog and to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)
Meeting with Murphy: the possibility of first carrying out the part of the American plan dealing with freedom of navigation, without waiting for resolution of differences of opinion on Gaza.

411 12 February 1957 **G. Avner to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)
Meeting with Rose: British support of the Pearson plan; efforts to prevent a U.N. resolution on sanctions; Britain cannot oppose the resolution because of its commitment to Nuri al-Said, but will abstain.

412 12 February 1957 **Y. Avidar to the East European Division** (telegram)
The Soviet approach to the three Western powers with a proposal for a joint plan to ensure peace in the Middle East; main points of Soviet policy in the Middle East.

413 12 February 1957 **S. Marcuse to J. Tsur**
The possibility of establishing informal ties with Tunisia.

414 13 February 1957 **A. Eban to G. Meir and J. Herzog** (telegram)
Eban urges the immediate acceptance in principle of Dulles' proposals, putting off negotiations on the details with the United States to a later date.

415 13 February 1957 **R. Shiloah to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Dulles' proposal is a significant turning point in the Administration's policy. Israel should agreed at once, before Eisenhower changes his mind; amendments and clarifications can be added later.

416 13 February 1957 **D. Lewin to the Asian and African Division**
Meeting with Foroughi, director-general of the Iranian Foreign Ministry: for the next few months the political aspect of Iran-Israel relations must be played down. Emphasises the importance of Doriel's position in Teheran.

417 14 February 1957 **M. Kidron to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Meeting with the secretary-general: renewed Fedaiyun activity originating in Sinai.

418 14 February 1957 **Meeting: D. Ben-Gurion — E. Lawson**
Discussion of Dulles' proposals on freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, the armistice agreement with Egypt and the Gaza Strip.

419 14 February 1957 **Ministry of Foreign Affairs to G. Meir and A. Eban** (telegram)
Guidelines for a reply to Dulles' proposals following the government decisions: Israel is prepared to negotiate on the proposals on freedom of navigation

420 14 February 1957 **J. Tsur to S. Z. Shragai**
The decision to send a representative of the World Jewish Congress to Morocco to negotiate on the emigration of Jews from there.

421 15 February 1957 **Aide Mémoire from the Government of Israel to the Department of State**
Reply to Dulles' proposals on ensuring freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba through involvement of the United States and other countries; future control of the Gaza Strip; Israel's right to free passage through the Suez Canal. Appendix: Points requiring clarification on the issue of the Gulf of Aqaba.

422 15 February 1957 **R. Shiloah to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Dulles' talk with Eban: the secretary's disappointment with the Israeli aide mémoire; Israel demands bilateral negotiations with the United States, but this cannot replace cooperation with the United Nations. He demands prompt acceptance of his proposals before the General Assembly convenes.

423 15 February 1957 **M. Sherman to L. Eshkol**
Proposals for projects to be funded in the framework of the Eisenhower Doctrine, which would be presented to Richards before his visit to Israel.

424 15 February 1957 **J. Tsur to L. Eshkol and M. Bartur** (telegram)
Foot-dragging in the approval of the loan from France to Israel.

425 16 February 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Assessment of the situation following Dulles' proposals.

426 16 February 1957 **D. Ben-Gurion to A. Eban** (telegram)
The good and bad points in Dulles' proposals; Israel's reply will be in accordance with the government decisions to demand guarantees of freedom of navigation and the non-return of Egypt to the Gaza Strip.

437 18 February 1957 **United States Division to the Israel Embassy in Washington** (telegram)
Ben-Gurion's talk with Lawson: Israel's wish to separate the issues of freedom of navigation and Gaza; the debate at the U.N. General Assembly on sanctions should be postponed until an agreement is achieved.

438 18 February 1957 **M. Fischer: Summary of a Report on his Mission to the Vatican (15 January–9 February 1957)**
Mission to obtain support for Israel's stand on current political issues and to advance relations with the Vatican.

439 18 February 1957 **E. Elath to the British Commonwealth Division** (telegram)
Shek's talk with Hadow: the British arms taken by the Jordanians after the evacuation of the Zarqa base; Israel's demands for arms supply from Britain.

440 19 February 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Meeting with Arthur Dean: an attempt to clarify Dulles' proposals and make them more flexible; Dulles' response via Dean.

441 19 February 1957 **Z. Argaman to A. Eban and J. Herzog** (telegram)
Conclusions of a discussion at the embassy in Washington: U.S. public opinion will not support Israel if it rejects Dulles' proposals; keeping forces in Sharm el-Sheikh in the face of U.N. and U.S. opinion will not guarantee Israel's security or freedom of navigation; positive elements in Dulles' proposal on freedom of navigation; his proposed solution for Gaza is not acceptable, but Israel must continue discussions.

442 19 February 1957 **J. Tsur to W. Eytan and the West European Division** (telegram)
Meeting with Daridan and Sebilleau: French support for Israel's stand, with a recommendation to be more flexible; Israel's demand that other countries join the guarantees for freedom of navigation.

443 19 February 1957 **J. Tsur to W. Eytan and the West European Division** (telegram)
Meeting with Blankenhorn, the German ambassador to NATO: the U.S. attempt to pressure Israel through the Federal Republic; Germany will not stop reparation payments which are a moral rather than a commercial commitment; German interest in the oil pipeline plan; there is no chance of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel at present.

453 21 February 1957 **R. Shiloah to the Prime Minister** (telegram)
A message from Walter Bedell Smith following his talk with the president and Dulles: his view that Dulles' proposals contain a moral obligation on the part of the United States towards Israel; urges Ben-Gurion to show flexibility.

454 21 February 1957 **E. Elath to the British Commonwealth Division and J. Tsur** (telegram)
Meeting with the new British prime minister, Macmillan: Israel's requests from Britain on guarantees and opposition to sanctions; the delays in the supply of weapons and spare parts from Britain; Macmillan's stand and the various factors influencing him.

455 21 February 1957 **E. Sasson to W. Eytan** (telegram)
Meeting with La Pira and Fanfani: Italy supports Israel's request to appoint a neutral committee to examine the situation and will support a declaration by the maritime powers that the Gulf of Aqaba is an international waterway. Italy is committed to Israel both politically and morally.

456 22 February 1957 **Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower**
After the government meeting for a discussion of the U.S. proposals, Eban is returning to Washington to convey the government's decision. Expresses hope that the debate at the U.N. General Assembly will be postponed.

457 22 February 1957 **W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad** (telegram)
Eban is on his way back to the United States and will continue negotiations there before the United States finalises its position.

458 22 February 1957 **J. Tsur to W. Eytan and the West European Division** (telegram)
Meeting with Pineau: France will take part in defending freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and will oppose sanctions; supporters and opponents of France's participation in the oil pipeline plan; French credit for Israel.

459 22 February 1957 **J. Tsur to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division** (telegram)
Meeting with Mollet: he will try to bring about a change in the U.S. attitude towards Israel, advises reducing the publicity about Israel's friendship with France.

460 22 February 1957 **Z. Argaman to S. Rosenne**
Following the Soviet Union's announcement cancelling the oil supply contracts with Israel, Israel can sue for damages.

471 25 February 1957 **J. Herzog to A. Eban** (telegram)
The prime minister regrets Eban's serious mistake in presenting Israel's stand on the Gaza Strip; the Americans should be notified and the issue of the Straits must be separated from that of Gaza.

472 25 February 1957 **A. Eban to D. Ben-Gurion** (telegram)
There was no chance of obtaining any agreement with the United States without a pledge to pull out the IDF from Gaza and bring in UNEF; in his opinion this was agreed with Ben-Gurion in their talks.

473 25 February 1957 **G. Meir to the Prime Minister** (telegram)
The reasons for Eban's proposal on the entry of UNEF into Gaza; the cooperation achieved with the United States must be preserved.

474 25 February 1957 **M. Comay to J. Herzog and A. Eban** (telegram)
Meeting with Pearson before his speech at the General Assembly: UNEF's role in the Gulf of Aqaba and in Gaza.

475 26 February 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Explanation of his stand on bringing UNEF into Gaza: without this proposal there was no chance of a solution or of gaining support from public opinion. He is willing for the government to draw its own conclusions.

476 26 February 1957 **D. Ben-Gurion to A. Eban** (telegram)
Regrets the misunderstanding between them; things are more positive than they seemed earlier.

477 26 February 1957 **J. Herzog to G. Meir and A. Eban** (telegram)
Instructions to Eban: due to the U.N. secretary-general's stand and the complications of the Gaza issue, Sharm el-Sheikh should be considered separately; various proposals for ensuring freedom of navigation; the proposal to appoint a U.N. committee to investigate the situation in Gaza.

478 26 February 1957 **R. Shiloah to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and J. Herzog** (telegram)
The latest Dulles-Eban talk: after the talks with the secretary-general a new situation has emerged; Dulles is not willing to separate the issues of the Straits and of Gaza; first mention of the Pineau plan.

479 26 February 1957 **E. Elath to the British Commonwealth Division** (telegram)
Macmillan's statement in Parliament: Israel's withdrawal from Sharm el-Sheikh and the recognition of its right to freedom of navigation should be linked; a U.N. regime in Gaza should be established immediately after Israel's withdrawal.

480 26 February 1957 **M. Tov to the Latin American Division** (telegram)
The stand of various Latin American countries on the question of sanctions against Israel.

481 27 February 1957 **A. Eban to D. Ben-Gurion** (telegram)
The main points of Pineau's plan: UNEF will receive full authority in Gaza; if Egypt interferes with the new situation there Israel will be entitled to defend its rights; assessment of the plan and its advantages.

482 27 February 1957 **G. Meir and A. Eban to D. Ben-Gurion** (telegram)
Pressure on the prime minister to accept Pineau's proposal, since there is no chance of reaching a more favourable arrangement.

483 27 February 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
The American doctrine about the international nature of the Gulf of Aqaba and Israel's right to defend its freedom of navigation does not require the approval of the General Assembly.

484 27 February 1957 **J. Herzog to A. Eban** (telegram)
The government accepts Pineau's proposal in principle; asks for further clarifications on the non-return of Egypt to the Gaza Strip and ensuring freedom of navigation.

485 27 February 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
The United States will support Israel's statement in the General Assembly regarding freedom of navigation and the right of self defence.

486 27 February 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Dulles' proposal ensures the permanent stationing of UNEF.

487 27 February 1957 **E. Elath to the British Commonwealth Division** (telegram)
Britain will support Pearson's proposal.

488 28 February 1957 **Israel Embassy in London to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)
Nahum Goldmann is concerned that the United States might exert pressure on the Federal Republic of Germany to discontinue reparation payments in case of sanctions.

489 28 February 1957 **Israel Minister in Warsaw to the East European Division** (telegram)
Reports the government's intention to slow down Jewish emigration from Poland

499	2 March 1957	**R. Shiloah to J. Herzog** (telegram) An approach to Bedell Smith, asking him to clarify with the president the issue of the deviation in Lodge's speech from the version agreed upon; President Eisenhower's reply: there has been no last-minute change in U.S. policy.
500	2 March 1957	**A. Eban to D. Ben-Gurion** (telegram) Presents Israel's current position as an achievement, especially after President Eisenhower's message and the improvement in Israel's status in the Gulf of Aqaba, in the Gaza Strip, in world public opinion and in the attitudes of U.S. public opinion and Congress.
501	2 March 1957	**A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram) Mollet and Pineau advise Israel not to create a new crisis because of Lodge's address.
502		**Editorial Note** The government's final decision on withdrawal, despite the threat to the coalition (1–5 March 1957).
503	3 March 1957	**D. Ben-Gurion to G. Meir and A. Eban** (telegram) The government meeting will ratify the withdrawal; Eban should try to obtain from Dulles a written statement on Israel's right to self defence should Egypt return to Gaza.
504	3 March 1957	**A. Eban to D. Ben-Gurion** (telegram) Meeting with Dulles: he is not prepared to provide an additional pledge with regard to Gaza; the commitment to an exchange of letters on the issue of the Gulf of Aqaba stands; the president's message has amended Lodge's speech at the U.N. General Assembly.
505	3 March 1957	**W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad** (telegram) Instructs Israel's representatives to ask the respective governments to tell their envoys at the U.N. to follow the example of the United States and France and to announce their recognition of the Gulf of Aqaba as an international waterway and their assumption that Gaza will remain under full U.N. control.
506	3 March 1957	**M. Touval to the Director of the East European Division** A report on the situation in Hungary, emigration to Israel and attitudes towards Israel.
507	4 March 1957	**A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram) Presents the government's decision and Israel's current status as an achievement, especially compared to other possibilities.

508 4 March 1957 **Y. Tekoah to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations** (telegram)

Proposals for measures to prevent the return of Egypt to the Gaza Strip once control is handed over to the United Nations.

509 5 March 1957 **D. Ben-Gurion to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)

The prime minister's stunned reaction to the report of Hammarskjöld's intention to pull UNEF out of the Strip within two weeks and let in the Egyptians.

510 5 March 1957 **A. Eban to D. Ben-Gurion** (telegram)

Meeting with Hammarskjöld: he denies any intentions of pulling out UNEF from the Gaza Strip within two weeks; during the initial period, whose length is undefined, control will be in the hands of the U.N. force only.

511 5 March 1957 **A. Eban to D. Ben-Gurion** (telegram)

Israel must take action in the U.S. and ensure official pressure on Hammarskjöld so that he takes no action except for sending UNEF into the Gaza Strip and setting up an administration there. He should not discuss further developments with the Egyptians.

512 5 March 1957 **W. Eytan to J. Tsur**

A message was received from Pineau following an Israeli request asking France to state that it initiated the plan to evacuate Gaza. Appendix (in Main Volume): Message from Pineau: France can only make a statement on its interpretation of Meir's statement in the United Nations.

513 5 March 1957 **M. Comay to the Director of the International Organizations Division**

The discussion in the Political Committee of the United Nations on the reports of UNRWA on refugees, particularly those in the Gaza Strip.

514 6 March 1957 **G. Meir to D. Ben-Gurion** (telegram)

Expresses disappointment with Dulles' statements at a press conference and questions his trustworthiness; the United States must not be allowed to evade the responsibility it has undertaken for the situation after Israel's withdrawal..

515 6 March 1957 **G. Rafael to J. Herzog** (telegram)

Meeting with Engen of the Advisory Committee, who is to accompany the U.N. secretary-general to Cairo. Israel's representatives emphasised that they should take care not to confuse the issue of navigation in the Suez Canal with that of permanent arrangements in the Gaza Strip.

516 6 March 1957 **G. Meir to J.F. Dulles**
Israel explains its view of the U.S. commitment to freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and on the issue of the Gaza Strip.

517 6 March 1957 **Y. Meroz to the United States Division**
Analyses the various groups expressing support for Israel in the U.S. Congress and the reasons for their attitude.

518 6 March 1957 **E. Ben-Horin to A. Lourie**
The Afro-Asian bloc and the Sinai Campaign – conclusions.

519 6 March 1957 **M. Comay to the International Organizations Division** (telegram)
Meeting with Labouisse: practical problems stemming from the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the inability of the U.N. to handle them.

520 7 March 1957 **Message from Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower**
Response to the president's message of 2 March: Israel has withdrawn from the Gaza Strip, despite its concerns, because of the U.S. commitment as expressed in the president's message.

521 7 March 1957 **J. Tsur to W. Eytan and the West European Division** (telegram)
Meeting with Joxe: Hammarskjöld's position on the Gulf of Aqaba, the Suez Canal and the Gaza Strip; France did not pressure Israel into accepting the compromise plan; the American stand on the oil pipeline plan.

522 7 March 1957 **J. Tsur to M. Bartur**
Jules Moch's stand as opposed to that of Ramadier on the issue of the oil pipeline; the weakness of Guy Mollet's government; the need for U.S. or British support for the pipeline plan.

523 7 March 1957 **F.E. Shinnar to W. Eytan** (telegram)
Meeting with Hallstein: chances and conditions for establishing diplomatic ties between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany.

524 8 March 1957 **United States Division to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations**
Ben-Gurion's talk with Lawson on delivery of Ben-Gurion's reply to the president: he sees a good chance that freedom of navigation will be ensured, but is concerned about the Gaza Strip; the prime minister hopes that he can rely on the promises of the president and Dulles.

525 8 March 1957 **M. Alon to W. Eytan**
The renewal of full diplomatic relations with Turkey is possible only through an approach to Prime Minister Menderes; suggests arranging a meeting between Eliahu Sasson and Menderes.

526 **Editorial Note**
The conclusion of the U.N. General Assembly session (8 March 1957).

527 9 March 1957 **A. Eban to the United States Division** (telegram)
Eban and Shiloah's talk with Deputy Secretary of State Herter: preparations for American ships to pass through the Gulf of Aqaba; Israel's right to free navigation through the Suez Canal after it reopens; renewal of economic ties between Israel and the United States, disagreement on the status of the armistice agreement between Israel and Egypt.

528 10 March 1957 **W. Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Washington** (telegram)
The test case of the Danish ship *Brigitta Tuft* which was on its way to the Gulf of Aqaba; the State Department should be asked to contact the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ensure the ship continues on to its destination.

529 11 March 1957 **Middle East Division to the Israel Missions Abroad** (telegram)
The methods being used by Egypt to take over the Gaza Strip.

530 11 March 1957 **M. Kidron to J. Herzog** (telegram)
The riots in the Gaza strip and their causes; attitudes towards UNEF; the appointment of an Egyptian governor for the Strip.

531 11 March 1957 **British Commonwealth Division to G. Avner** (telegram)
Israel must protest against Lloyd's proposals for ending the Israel-Arab conflict, which revert to the principles of the 1955 Guildhall speech and include an attempt to appease the Arabs.

532 12 March 1957 **M. Kidron to J. Herzog and R. Shiloah** (telegram)
Meetings with members of the Advisory Committee and with Hammarskjöld on developments in the Gaza Strip; the instructions given to Bunche for his talk with Nasser.

533 12 March 1957 **W. Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Washington** (telegram)
Meir's talk with Lawson: Egypt's actions in the Gaza Strip are contrary to all commitments and understandings with Israel; the United States must fulfill its obligations; the U.N. secretary-general must be made aware of the seriousness of the situation.

534 12 March 1957 **Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (telegram)
Shiloah's talk with Herter: Israel's deep concern over developments in the Strip; only intervention by the United States and a firm stand towards the U.N. secretary-general and Egypt can prevent further deterioration.

535 12 March 1957 **J. Tsur to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and W. Eytan** (telegram)
Meeting with Pineau: the dangers inherent in the current situation in Gaza; the responsibility of the United States; France's support for Israel's position; prospects for freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal, French participation in financing the oil pipeline.

536 12 March 1957 **W. Eytan to the Israel Ambassador in Washington** (telegram)
Meir's talk with Gilbert: the United States should be warned about the dangerous situation; Israel must insist on its right to send a ship in the first convoy to pass through the Suez Canal.

537 12 March 1957 **M. Bartur to the Israel Ambassador in Washington**
The American tanker *Kern Hills* is on its way to Iran to load oil and will arrive in Eilat via the Gulf of Aqaba.

538 13 March 1957 **Message from Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower**
Declares that Egypt, by its actions in the Gaza Strip and the Suez Canal, is violating the understanding between the United States and Israel concerning the withdrawal. Appeals to President Eisenhower to intervene, so that Israel will not be forced into exercising its right to self defence.

539 13 March 1957 **A. Eban to G. Meir and J. Herzog** (telegram)
Eban and Shiloah's talk with Herter, Murphy and Rountree: delivery of the prime minister's message to President Eisenhower; the understandings which enabled Israel's withdrawal and the developments in the Gaza Strip; the United States must take action to prevent the return of Egypt to the Strip.

540 13 March 1957 **A. Eban to the United States Division** (telegram)
The United States should send an American ship to exercise freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba; this will influence other countries and serve as a precedent.

541 13 March 1957 **A. Eban to the United States Division** (telegram)
The United States is about to announce the renewal of economic cooperation with Israel.

542 13 March 1957 **J. Barmore to the East European Division** (telegram)
Poland has prohibited the immigration to Israel of repatriated Jews, probably under Soviet pressure.

543 14 March 1957 **A. Eban to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Meeting with Hammarskjöld: Israel's expectations from him in view of the expected arrival of an Egyptian governor in Gaza.

544 14 March 1957 **C. Herter to G. Meir**
Reply to Meir's letter of 6 March: the United States sees no difficulties with regard to freedom of navigation; however it disagrees with Israel on the question of Egypt's status in the Gaza Strip.

545 14 March 1957 **Z. Argaman to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Eban's meeting with Rountree: the assessment of Herter and the State Department of Egypt's entry into Gaza Strip; the United States will take action to ensure that the United Nations fulfills its responsibility for the administration of Gaza.

546 14 March 1957 **J. Herzog to A. Eban** (telegram)
Breach of trust on the part of the United States: Dulles has denied that the United States supported Israel's right to self defence in the Gaza Strip, Herter had mentioned deploying UNEF on both sides of the border (on Israel's side as well).

547 14 March 1957 **J. Tsur to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and W. Eytan** (telegram)
Meetings with Joxe and Daridan: France's actions on behalf of Israel including Mollet's message to Eisenhower, Alphand's approach to Herter, Georges-Picot's talk with Hammarskjöld.

548 15 March 1957 **M. Kidron to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and J. Herzog** (telegram)
The Eban-Hammarskjöld talk before the latter's trip to Cairo: the situation in the Gaza Strip; the positions of Israel and Egypt; the role of UNEF.

549 15 March 1957 **Message from President Eisenhower to Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion**
The United States abides by its hopes and assumptions regarding the Middle East; he calls on Israel to avoid any hasty action.

550 15 March 1957 **G. Avner to the British Commonwealth Division** (telegram)
Meeting with Ross: the situation in Gaza and Israel's withdrawal; the arms received by Jordan; Israel's demands for the supply of arms from Britain; credit for civilian and military purchases from Britain.

551 16 March 1957 **M. Kidron to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Eban's meeting with Pearson: Canada's position on the role of UNEF in the Gaza Strip.

552 16 March 1957 **J. Tsur to W. Eytan and the West European Division** (telegram)
Meir's talks in Paris: Mollet is angry with Dulles for misleading him on the issue of the Gaza Strip; Joxe said that France will support Israel's stand on the status of UNEF in the Gaza Strip; Bourgès-Maunoury said that France will support Israel should it be forced to take action against Egypt.

553 16 March 1957 **J. Barmore to A. Eshel** (telegram)
Data and interim figures on Jews leaving the Soviet Union for Poland under the repatriation agreement; the causes for delays in their emigration to Israel.

554 17 March 1957 **D. Ben-Gurion to G. Meir** (telegram)
There is no point in addressing Hammarskjöld again until he has received a clear pledge from Egypt.

555 17 March 1957 **M. Comay to J. Herzog** (telegram)
Meir's talk with Pearson: the situation in the Gaza Strip; the role of UNEF; the United States must warn Nasser not to interfere in internal security matters.

556 17 March 1957 **J. Herzog to the Israel Embassy in Washington and the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations** (telegram)
Ben-Gurion's response to President Eisenhower's message: Israel will not cause any further deterioration in the situation; he hopes the United States will exert its influence to establish exclusive U.N. control of the Gaza Strip.

557 17 March 1957 **M. Bartur to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Commerce and Industry**
The French loan and France's participation in financing the oil pipeline.

558 17 March 1957 **F. E. Shinnar to the Ministry of Foreign Affair**s (telegram)
Meeting with Boehm: establishing diplomatic ties between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany; Brentano's opinion on the difficulties involved.

567 20 March 1957 **Y. Shimoni to the Asian and African Division** (telegram)
Meeting with Burmese Prime Minister U Nu: his denial that Burma-Israel relations were harmed despite the latter's stand at the United Nations; economic cooperation between the two countries.

568 21 March 1957 **G. Rafael to J. Herzog**
Summary of Meir's activities in the United States: her meeting with Dulles, the joint statement and confirmation of the joint policy on Gaza and on navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal; preparing public opinion and enlisting it for the struggle against Nasser and a possible military campaign.

569 21 March 1957 **A. Eban to the United States Division** (telegram)
Meeting with Herter: Egypt's claim to belligerency rights; UNEF's role in Gaza; freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and in the Suez Canal.

570 21 March 1957 **A. Eban to the United States Division** (telegram)
Meir's talk with Lodge: following Egypt's actions, Israel's status in the United Nations and in world public opinion has improved; his support for stationing a token U.N. force on the Israeli side of the border.

571 22 March 1957 **Y. Tekoah to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations** (telegram)
The situation in the Gaza Strip; developments in Egypt's takeover of the Strip.

572 22 March 1957 **W. Eytan to the Israel Embassy in Washington** (telegram)
A press report from the Bermuda conference that the United States and Britain had agreed to Egyptian administration of the Gaza Strip and stationing UNEF on both sides of the border; Meir's reaction.

573 24 March 1957 **Y. Meroz to J. Herzog and M. Kidron** (telegram)
Rafael and Meroz's talks with Bergus: Egypt's stand on the issue of freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal and in the Gulf of Aqaba and Egypt's claim to belligerency rights; the significance of the closing statement of the Bermuda conference; the future of Jordan.

574 25 March 1957 **Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division and the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations** (telegram)
Arad's talk with Shaw of the State Department: Nasser's intransigence on navigation through the Suez Canal; the decisions of the Bermuda conference on the Canal issue and alternative means of transporting oil.

Chronology
October 1956–March 1957

October

22–24 The Sèvres Conference. Signing of the Sèvres Protocol, the plan for a joint attack by Great Britain, France and Israel on Egypt and in the Sinai peninsula.

24 Agreement on a joint military command for the armies of Jordan, Syria and Egypt under Egyptian command.
Uprising in Budapest against the pro-Soviet regime. Military intervention by the U.S.S.R. to quell the revolt.

27 President Eisenhower sends a message calling on the government of Israel to keep the peace in the Middle East.

28 Ben-Gurion makes a public announcement explaining the reasons for mobilisation of the reserves.

29 Start of the Sinai Campaign. Israeli troops cross the border at Kuntilla. Paratroops land in the Mitla pass.
U.S. Secretary of State Dulles discusses activating the Tripartite Declaration of 1950 with the British and French ambassadors.
The United States requests a meeting of the U.N. Security Council.
Unilateral cancellation by the Soviet Union of agreements to supply fuel oil to Israel.
53 residents of Kafr Qasim in Israel are killed by Border Guard soldiers.

30 The IDF takes Qouseima. An armoured column joins up with the paratroop unit in the Mitla pass. Three sessions of the Security Council. The United States submits a draft resolution calling for an immediate withdrawal and denial of assistance to Israel. Britain and France veto the proposal and a Soviet proposal for a cease-fire. President Eisenhower sends a request to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion via Abba Hillel Silver that Israel promise to cease fire and to withdraw.
Britain and France submit an ultimatum to Israel and Egypt to withdraw 10 miles from the Suez Canal.

31 Egypt rejects the ultimatum, Israel accepts it. Israel takes Abou Aoueigila.
An Egyptian destroyer surrenders off the coast of Haifa. 4 Egyptian jets are shot down.
British planes bomb Egyptian airfields.
The IDF reaches the10 mile line from the Suez Canal.
Ben-Gurion replies to Eisenhower's message: Israel will withdraw when peace with Egypt is signed.

Canada bans export of arms to Israel.
The Security Council decides to convene a special emergency session of the U.N. General Assembly.

November

1 The IDF takes El-Arish, Gaza and Rafah.
The Red Army surrounds Budapest.
Opening of the emergency session of the General Assembly. Dulles submits a draft resolution calling for a cease-fire and withdrawal by the parties to the hostilities.

2 The General Assembly adopts the American draft resolution.
Canadian External Affairs Minister Pearson proposes establishment of an international U.N. emergency force (UNEF).
U.N. Secretary-General Hammarskjöld informs Foreign Minister Meir that Egypt has agreed to a cease-fire and asks for Israel's agreement.

3 Britain and France reject the U.N. call for a cease-fire.
The IDF reaches Sharm el-Sheikh.
Israel's ambassador to the U.N., Eban, announces Israel's agreement to the cease-fire at the General Assembly and its rejection of the validity of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement.
A draft resolution by the Afro-Asian bloc demands withdrawal of the forces within 12 hours.
Iraqi and Syrian forces enter Jordan.

4 The General Assembly adopts the Afro-Asian resolution on immediate withdrawal of forces and passes a resolution for the establishment of UNEF. General Burns is appointed commander of the Force.
Britain and France protest to Israel over its agreement to a cease-fire. The government decides to add reservations to its agreement.
The Red Army takes control of Budapest and crushes the revolt.

5 Surrender of the Egyptian forces at Sharm el-Sheikh. The IDF completes the conquest of Sinai.
Opening of Operation Musketeer – the Anglo-French air attack on Egypt and landing of paratroop forces in Port Said.
Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir informs the U.N. that Israel is willing to withdraw and puts five questions to Egypt on the state of belligerency between it and Israel.
Soviet Premier Bulganin sends letters to the prime ministers of Israel, France and Britain threatening use of force by the U.S.S.R. in the Middle East.
The U.S.S.R. recalls its ambassador from Israel.

The Security Council convenes on the initiative of the U.S.S.R. which proposes use of Soviet and American forces in the Middle East. The proposal is rejected.

6 Opening of the Anglo-French ground attack on Port Said, which lasts one day.

President Eisenhower is re-elected to a second term, but the Democrats retain their majority in Congress.

7 Ben-Gurion announces the government's policy in the Knesset (Parliament): cancellation of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement and a call for peace negotiations.

A further U.N. General Assembly resolution calling for immediate withdrawal is adopted by 65 to 1 opposed (Israel).

Eisenhower sends a letter to Ben-Gurion demanding unconditional withdrawal and compliance with Assembly resolutions.

Deputy Secretary of State Hoover gives an oral message on behalf of Dulles, threatening a halt to all U.S. aid to Israel, imposition of sanctions and expulsion from the U.N.

British Prime Minister Eden announces Britain's agreement to withdraw its forces from Egypt on the arrival of UNEF.

8 Ben-Gurion's reply to Eisenhower: Israel agrees to withdraw upon conclusion of satisfactory arrangements with the U.N. on the entry of UNEF.

UNEF is established.

Ben-Gurion's reply to Bulganin: Israel's operation in Sinai was an act of self defence.

9 Ben-Gurion explains the decision to withdraw in a broadcast to the nation.

10 The U.S.S.R. threatens to send "volunteers" to the Middle East.

The Emergency Assembly decides to transfer the debate on the Middle East to the regular session of the 11th General Assembly.

12 Opening session of the 11th General Assembly.

Egypt agrees to the entry of UNEF.

14 Advance units of UNEF leave for Egypt. The secretary-general accompanies them for talks with Nasser.

15 Bulganin's second letter to Israel, Britain and France: demands compensation for Egypt as the victim of aggression.

16 Hoover warns the U.S.S.R. against sending "volunteers" to the Middle East.

18 Ben-Gurion rejects Bulganin's letter: Israel is entitled to demand compensation from Egypt.

24 The General Assembly adopts an Afro-Asian draft resolution calling for the withdrawal of all forces without delay. A more moderate Belgian draft is rejected.

26 Turkey recalls its minister from Israel.
The Knesset condemns persecution of the Jews in Egypt.

27 Israel submits a letter about persecution of the Jews in Egypt to the president of the General Assembly.

December

1 Israel announces the withdrawal of its forces to a line 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the Suez Canal. UNEF replaces the IDF.

2 Work starts on the oil pipeline from Eilat to Beer Sheba.

6 Chief of Staff Dayan meets with the commander of UNEF in El-Arish; they reach agreement on Israel's withdrawal from Sinai and the entry of UNEF.

8 The U.S.S.R. withdraws its threat to send "volunteers" to the Middle East.

11 The NATO Council meets in Paris. Among the subjects discussed is the danger to the Middle East as a result of Soviet penetration.

12 Ben-Gurion's announcement in the Knesset on the massacre at Kafr Qasim, describing the findings of the commission of enquiry and the offer of compensation.

16 Dayan informs Burns that Israeli forces will withdraw at the rate of 25 kilometres per week.

21 The U.S.S.R. announces the return of its ambassador to Israel.

22 Israel informs the secretary-general that it will withdraw to El-Arish in the first week of January.
Britain and France complete their withdrawal from Egypt.

25 An Israel Navy ship arrives in Eilat. A naval base is set up there.

28 Iraqi forces are withdrawn from Jordan.

January

1 The U.S. halts talks with Israel on the Development Loan Fund, the grant-in-aid and assistance in food surpluses.
Clearing the Suez Canal begins after the British and French withdrawal from Port Said and the north of the Canal.

5 President Eisenhower presents his doctrine for the Middle East to a joint meeting of both Houses of Congress.

6 Jewish refugees from Egypt reach Italy.

9 First stage of the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai completed. The IDF pulls back to El-Arish.

Eden resigns and Harold Macmillan replaces him as prime minister.

11 Saudi guns fire on an Israeli ship in the Gulf of Aqaba.

15 The IDF evacuates El-Arish.

19 The U.N. General Assembly adopts by a large majority another Afro-Asian resolution calling for Israel's withdrawal.

22 The IDF's withdrawal from Sinai is completed, except for the Gaza Strip and the coastal strip from Sharm el-Sheikh to Eilat. The number of Jewish refugees from Egypt reaches 10,000.

24 75 Democratic Congressmen call on the State Department to give guarantees to Israel.

27 Exchange of prisoners between Israel and Egypt.

29 King Saud arrives in New York.

30 The House of Representatives gives the president authority to carry out his doctrine for the Middle East.

February

2 The U.N. General Assembly passes two resolutions: one calling for Israeli withdrawal without delay, the second calling for the observance of the armistice agreements and the stationing of UNEF on the armistice demarcation lines.

3 Letter from Eisenhower to Ben-Gurion, demanding that Israel comply with U.N. resolutions and warning that the United States will not hesitate to support sanctions against it.

6 41 Republican congressmen inform the State Department of their opposition to Israeli withdrawal without guarantees.

7 The Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations opens a pro-Israel campaign opposing sanctions.

8 France offers Israel $30 million in credit.

11 Dulles gives Eban a memorandum on U.S. support for guarantees to Israel of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba by exercising its own navigation rights; he demands Israeli withdrawal in compliance with U.N. resolutions.

12 Laying of the oil pipeline from Eilat to Beer Sheba completed.

14 The Federal Republic of Germany informs the U.S. that despite the pressure on it, it will continue to carry out the reparations agreement with Israel.

17 Eisenhower announces that the U.S. has offered Israel all the guarantees it can provide. Rupture in relations with the president and the threat of sanctions.

20 Eisenhower talks with leaders of Congress from both parties who oppose his policy and sends a message of warning to Ben-Gurion.
Eisenhower's broadcast to the nation supporting Israel's demand for freedom of navigation but demanding withdrawal. He warns that pressure will be applied to ensure compliance with U.N. resolutions.
21 Dulles summons non-Zionist Jewish leaders to persuade them to put pressure on Israel.
22 The Afro-Asian bloc demands sanctions against Israel in the General Assembly.
24 French Prime Minister Mollet visits Washington and demands that the president give guarantees to Israel.
25 The Assembly meeting is postponed.
26 Canada tries to put forward a more moderate resolution. The clause on sanctions is removed.
Dulles and French Foreign Minister Pineau draft the "Pineau plan" for the solution of the Gaza problem: U.N. civilian administration of the Strip in co-operation with Israel and Egypt. Israel's right to self-defence if Egypt breaks the agreement is recognised.
27 A special government meeting in Israel approves the agreement with the United States.

March

1 Foreign Minister Meir makes an announcement in the General Assembly on Israel's agreement to withdraw from Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh on the understanding that it will receive guarantees.
The U.S. representative, Lodge, declares American support for freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba but emphasises Egypt's rights in the Gaza Strip.
Dulles informs the Arab states that there is no secret agreement with Israel.
2 Israel protests to the U.S. about Lodge's speech.
Eisenhower sends a letter to Ben-Gurion reaffirming the U.S. stand and commitment to Israel.
4 Ben-Gurion instructs Dayan to carry out the withdrawal. Dayan and Burns meet to fix the arrangements for withdrawal.
Meir informs the General Assembly of the arrangements for withdrawal and confirms her announcement of 1 March.
The U.N. delegations of 12 states confirm their support for freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. The U.S.S.R., India and the Arab states oppose prolonging the stay of UNEF.

5 Dulles announces the renewal of economic aid to Israel. He denies that a plan exists to send a U.S. ship to Eilat and supports referral of the issue of Egyptian belligerent rights to the International Court at the Hague. The Senate approves the Eisenhower Doctrine.

7 The Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is completed and UNEF takes control of the Strip.

8 The Israeli withdrawal from Sharm el-Sheikh is completed and UNEF enters.

Hammarskjöld reports to the General Assembly on the completion of the Israeli withdrawal. The Assembly session comes to an end.

9 The Eisenhower Doctrine is signed by the president – economic and military aid to Middle East states to help them maintain their independence in the face of Soviet encroachment.

10 Mass demonstrations in Gaza demanding the return of Egyptian rule.

UNEF disperses the riots by force and declares a curfew. U.N. Under-Secretary Bunche arrives in Egypt to discuss the status of UNEF in Gaza.

11 Egypt accuses UNEF of exceeding its authority, announces its resumption of rule in Gaza and appoints a governor. Nasser declares that he will not permit Israeli ships to pass through the Gulf of Aqaba or the Suez Canal.

12 The president's special envoy to the Middle East, Richards, leaves for talks on the Eisenhower Doctrine in the region.

13 Cancellation of the Anglo-Jordanian agreement of 1948.

14 The Egyptian governor and his entourage enter Gaza.

15 Message from Eisenhower to Ben-Gurion: the United States stands by its hopes and assumptions regarding the Middle East. Calls on Israel to refrain from precipitate action.

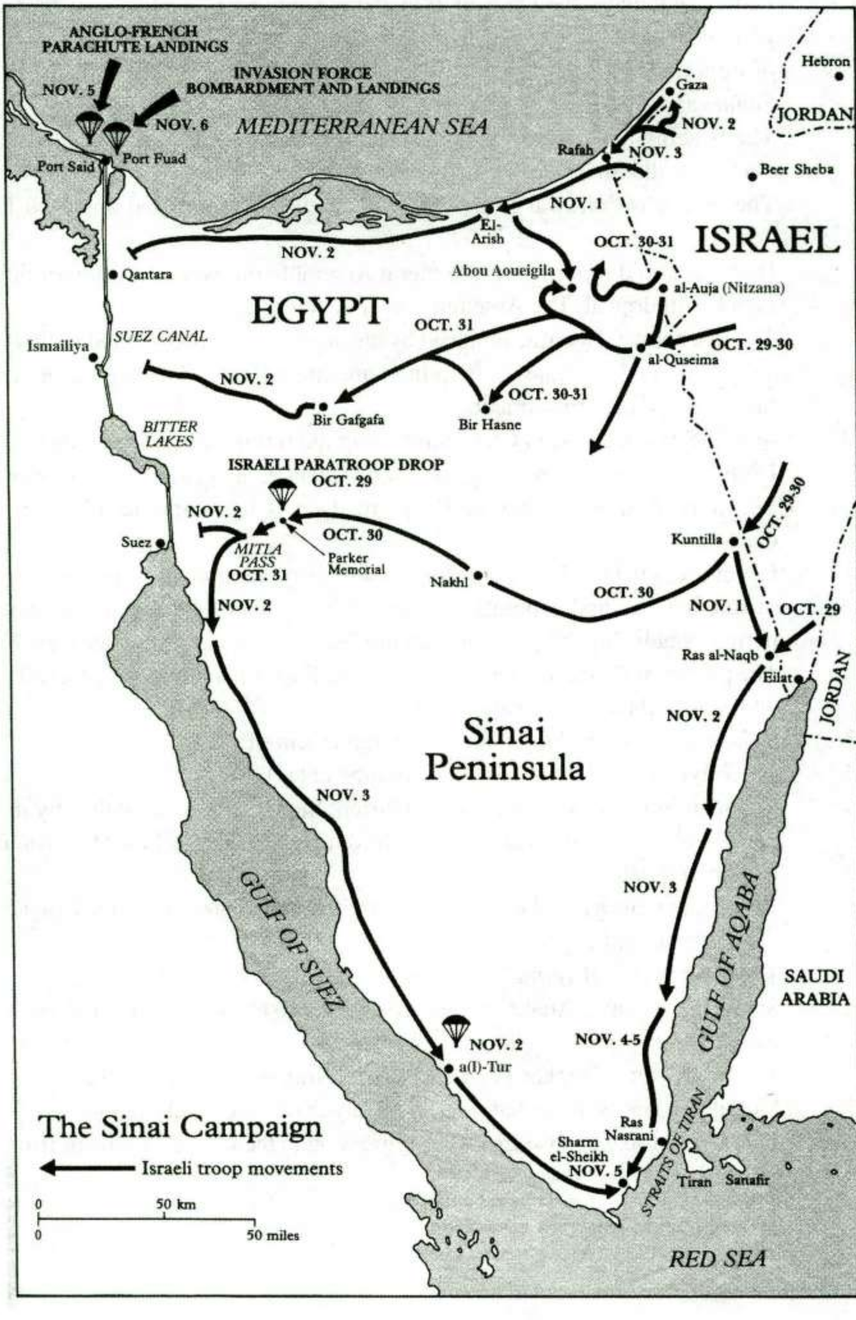
18 Joint statement by Dulles and Meir: the United States supports Israel's assumptions and expectations.

25 The Danish ship *Brigitta Tuft* reaches Eilat.

26 Saudi forces enter Aqaba in place of the British forces evacuated from there.

The American oil tanker *Kern Hills* leaves Iran on its way to Eilat.

27 Mollet announces in the National Assembly that France will support Israel's right to use force against Egyptian aggression in the Gulf of Aqaba or from Gaza.



Based on Keith Kyle, *Suez*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson,
courtesy of Mrs. Susan Kyle

SUMMARIES OF HEBREW DOCUMENTS AND NOTES

1. Editorial Note

The Situation on the Israeli-Jordanian Border on the Eve of the Sinai Campaign

In the summer of 1956 there was a significant deterioration in security on the Israeli-Jordanian border. There were violent infiltrations by Fedaiyun terrorist gangs, murders, mine-laying and provocations all along the border. Farmers trying to cultivate land inside Israel were harassed, and even soldiers from the Jordanian Arab Legion launched attacks.

In response, Israel staged a series of retaliatory raids against police stations in the Hebron and Bethlehem sectors, which escalated in scale, culminating in the raid on the Qalqilya police station on 10 October. However the operation did not succeed as expected and there were many casualties among the soldiers. Doubts arose in the IDF concerning the purpose and effectiveness of the strategy of retaliation.

Moreover, Israel had to take into account broader military and political considerations with regard to Jordan: the fragile situation in the kingdom stemming from the weakness of the monarchy and the latter's inability to control the army and defend itself against Egyptian subversion. Compounding this were British interests in Jordan; the mutual defence treaty concluded by the two countries in 1948 was still in effect, and Great Britain was thereby obligated to assist Jordan in the event that it was attacked by Israel. With the encouragement and support of the British, King Hussein approached the Hashemite royal family in Iraq on 15 September with the request that they send troops to assist their relatives, the Jordanian rulers. The aim was to prevent a pro-Nasser revolution in the kingdom, even though the move was presented as a precaution against Israeli aggression. The Americans also favoured this plan.

On 1 October, Lawson, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, informed Ben-Gurion of the establishment of a unified Jordanian-Iraqi command and the plan for entry of a "symbolic" Iraqi force into Jordan. Although Lawson got the impression that Israel accepted the plan under certain conditions, Israel subsequently added a series of qualifications and restrictions to its agreement whose practical implication was opposition to the whole initiative.

In the light of the Qalqilya operation, King Hussein feared that Israel was about to open a broader front against Jordan and requested that Britain intervene. Already on 12 October, Westlake, first secretary of the British embassy in Israel, told Ben-Gurion that an Iraqi division was about to enter Jordan and that the British would come to Jordan's assistance if Israel intervened. That same day Israel expressed its concern in a letter to the United States, in which the foreign minister, Golda Meir, stated that she would regard the entry of an Iraqi force into Jordan as a violation of the status quo and a severe threat to Israeli security (see

Vol. 11, January-October 1956, Main Volume, no. 483; *The Sinai Campaign, A Collection of Selected Documents* p. 3, in File 130.02/2448/14).

During the last ten days of October several dramatic changes took place which altered the entire picture in the Middle East. In elections held in Jordan on 21 October, the anti-Western and pro-Nasser forces triumphed, and three days later an agreement was signed for the establishment of a joint military command (under Egyptian control) for the armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria. These two events had a great impact on the status of Great Britain in Jordan and on the chances for Iraqi intervention at Jordan's behest. At the same time, France, Britain and Israel were holding a decisive conference in a villa in Sèvres, near Paris. There the final decision was made for close cooperation between the three powers in the event of their anticipated attack in Egypt and Sinai (see Vol. 11, Companion Volume, Introduction, pp. xlii–xliii, see also no. 500).

At this stage the two chains of events, which had previously proceeded concurrently but independently, began to intersect. On the one hand the tension on the Jordanian border was close to boiling point, while on the other, the military alliance formed at Sèvres was preparing for war in Sinai and on the Suez Canal. In order to protect itself against possible British support for Jordan in future Israeli-Jordanian hostilities, Israel insisted on linking the alliance for the forthcoming war in Sinai with a British commitment regarding the Jordanian front. The Sèvres agreement therefore included an explicit clause to the effect that Israel would refraining from initiating an attack on Jordan, but would be entitled to respond if Jordan attacked it, and that Britain would not intervene (see Vol. 11, *ibid.*). The Sèvres agreement, then, neutralized Israel's apprehensions in this regard. Nevertheless, due to the sensitive nature of the pretext for war with Egypt, which Israel was supposed to supply, and the need for absolute secrecy, Israel could not reveal the real adversary against which it was mobilising until the actual onset of hostilities. Maintaining the impression that the enemy was Jordan thenceforth became the cover story for the military deployment, both for the Israeli public and the outside world. The massive mobilisation that began in Israel at the end of October, in anticipation of war with Egypt, could therefore have been legitimately interpreted as preparation for a military operation against Jordan. The reason why the ruse was so successful was because it was based on genuine tension in the relations between Israel and Jordan.

The call-up of the reserves together with Israel's deliberate policy of obscuring its political and military objectives aroused grave apprehensions in the United States that Israel was indeed about to launch an attack on Jordan. This motivated President Eisenhower to send Ben-Gurion a series of messages of increasing urgency on the subject. A message from Secretary of State Dulles to Eban, the Israeli ambassador in Washington, dated 15 October, stated that the president knew the situation in the Middle East was tense and volatile, and understood that Israel was sensitive to pressure. It nevertheless expressed hope that the situation would not be exacerbated

and that action would not be taken which would put Israel in the wrong and the United States in a difficult position (see Vol. 11, no. 491, compare *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVI, no. 345, pp. 724–726).

On 20 October Ben-Gurion replied to the president, in keeping with Israel's obfuscatory line at that point, that he concurred with Eisenhower's wish for friendship between the two countries, and asked him to exercise his influence in order to prevent the entry of an Iraqi army into Jordan which would jeopardise Israel's security (*ibid.*, no. 498).

The president's response in the next communication (27 October, see no. 2 below), which was still devoted largely to the tension between Israel and Jordan, attests to the fact that the United States, still unaware of the true state of events, had been convinced by Israel's presentation. Until the onset of actual combat, the Americans were completely oblivious to the dramatic about-face that had transpired in the military and strategic situation in the Middle East in the wake of the Sèvres agreement.

2. Message from President Eisenhower (Washington) to Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion. 27 October 1956

Copy: 93.08/417/3

Notes

1. See Vol. 11 no. 498.
2. In a conversation initiated by Ambassador Lawson on 1 October, Ben-Gurion stated that if the Iraqi army remained in Jordan but refrained from crossing the Jordan River, Israel would do nothing. But if it were to cross the river, Israel would consider this problematic since there was no armistice agreement between it and Iraq, and Israel could not consent to Iraqi control of the West Bank (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 1 October 1956). See also Editorial Note no. 1.
3. See Vol. 11, no. 491.

3. Meeting: D. Ben-Gurion — E. Lawson (Tel Aviv, 28 October 1956)

Note for the record: 130.02/2448/6

Notes

1. Compare Lawson's cable to the State Department of 28–29 October at midnight, in which he reported on his meeting with Ben-Gurion (*FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 401, pp. 811–813).
2. Lawson had already asked to meet with Ben-Gurion on the morning of Sunday 28 October. But Ben-Gurion postponed the meeting until the evening, after the cabinet had made the decision that morning to go to war. See Editorial Note no. 5.
3. See no. 2.
4. See Editorial Note, no. 5 .
5. Great Britain and France raised the issue of navigation in the Suez Canal in the Security Council on 5 October. See no. 9, note 1.
6. In the conclusion to his original report (see *FRUS*, *ibid.)*., Lawson expressed some doubt concerning the credibility of Ben-Gurion's claims, noting that in his opinion the prime minister was deliberately minimising the scope of the Israeli call-up. He also pointed out how carefully worded Ben-Gurion's statements were, and his refusal to guarantee that hostilities would not erupt.

4. Message from President Eisenhower (Washington) to Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion. 28 October 1956

Copy: 130.02/2401/13

Notes

1. The reference is to the president's message of 15 October. See Editorial Note no. 1.
2. Within the framework of U.S. attempts to forestall Russian penetration of the Middle East, in May 1950 the three Powers had issued the Tripartite Declaration. In this declaration the United States, Great Britain and France announced that they would intervene (within the framework of the U.N). if one Middle Eastern country threatened or sought to infringe on the borders or sovereignty of another. One of the clauses in the declaration referred to the supply of weapons for purposes of self defence or regional defence; such a step would be permitted only if coordinated among the three Powers (see Vol. 5, nos. 248, 249).
3. Parallel to this message President Eisenhower issued a press release at a press conference on 28 October which reiterated the main points of the two communications to Ben-Gurion (see *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 395, p. 802).

5. Editorial Note

The Government's Decision to Go to War (28 October 1956)

Immediately upon his return from the Sèvres conference, Ben-Gurion undertook a number of steps to implement the decisions made at the conference and to prepare for the opening of hostilities. Among these was a general mobilisation of the reserves, which began on 26 October.

On the same day Ben-Gurion held a series of meetings with government ministers to obtain their assent to the decision that was to be brought before the government two days later. Most of the ministers were unaware of developments, and in his meetings with ministers from the National Religious Party, Achdut HaAvoda, the Progressive Party and his own Mapai (Israel Labour Party) the prime minister informed them of the war plans and the causes for war, and, in brief, of the agreement on cooperation with Britain and France. The discussions continued throughout the weekend, and the premier's meetings with the Mapam ministers were held at the last minute, immediately prior to the government meeting. All of the ministers expressed support or lack of opposition (Achdut Ha'Avoda) for the launching of hostilities, with the exception of the Mapam ministers. The latter opposed the decision, but announced that, although they would voice their position in the government meeting, they would continue to share in joint responsibility, and would remain in the coalition (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary of 26–28 October, 1956).

The government convened on Sunday morning, 28 October. In his opening review Ben-Gurion did not explicitly mention the practical plans for war, as specified in the Sèvres agreement. Instead, he reiterated the well-known casus belli: the tense relations with Egypt, the Fedaiyun operations, the three-way military alliance between Egypt, Jordan and Syria and the denial of Israel's right to freedom of navigation. The prime minister did not speak of war but only of a raid, and gave his assessment regarding the likely response of the Great Powers and the chances they would intervene.

The wording of the decision settled on at the end of the meeting was deliberately vague: "We have decided to empower the prime minister and defence minister to respond in whatever way he sees fit to the renewal of Fedaiyun operations under the orders of the Egyptian command." (The deliberations on the subject and the decision are classified as secret and are not included in the minutes of the government meeting. See stenographic record of the government meeting, 28 October 1956, in file 77.0/9/30.)

After the meeting Ben-Gurion reported the decision to the president of Israel and the leader of the opposition.

That afternoon Ben-Gurion made a statement in a radio broadcast in the name of the government, informing the country why they had decided to mobilise the reserves:

"The renewal of Fedaiyun operations by the rulers of Egypt over the last two weeks, from within the borders of Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan; the establishment of a military alliance between Egypt, Jordan and Syria directed against Israel; the announcement by the rulers of the Hashemite kingdom that their first priority is to make war on Israel until its destruction; similar declarations on the part of the rulers of Egypt and Syria; the mobilisation of the Iraqi army on the Jordanian border — all of these require us to call up a number of reservists, in the interests of caution and the security of the border area and the settlements on the periphery [...]

Lest we be faced with a surprise attack from the south, north or east without an adequate defensive posture, it was found necessary to mobilise some reserve battalions and deploy them along these borders, in order to hold off a possible enemy attack and provide us with enough time, in the event that we are attacked, to mobilise the reserve soldiers, as Israel's security depends on them and on them alone [...]" (*Ha'aretz*, 29 October 1956).

The Sinai Campaign began the next day. After a regiment of paratroopers parachuted into the Mitla Pass and Israeli troops broke through into Sinai, the IDF spokesman issued the following bulletin that evening:

"IDF forces entered Ras al-Naqb and Kuntilla and attacked Fedaiyun units there, and seized positions west of the Nakhl junction near the Suez Canal. This operation comes in the wake of Egyptian attacks on Israeli land and sea transport, attacks whose aim is to sow destruction and deny Israeli citizens a peaceful life."

(This announcement was cabled to Israeli consulates abroad by the Foreign Ministry. See Coded Circular Tel. 226, 29 October 1956, 130.02/2401/13.)

Concomitantly, the Foreign Ministry was working on a political statement explaining the objectives of the war, which was issued by the ministry spokesman two hours later. The statement was very ambiguous. As in the IDF bulletin, the onset of combat was portrayed as a large-scale reprisal in response to Fedaiyun operations. Later in the announcement, however, the military offensive was presented as an expression of the state of Israel's right to self-defence in the light of the blockade that had been applied against it and the denial of Israeli freedom of navigation both in the Suez Canal and in the Gulf of Aqaba. Egypt's repeated declarations that it was in a continuing state of war with Israel were cited as another ground for the offensive. In a directive issued to Israel missions abroad the Foreign Ministry stated that it should be stressed that the Israeli operation was not connected with the conflict between the Great Powers and Egypt over the Suez Canal (see Foreign Ministry to the Israel missions abroad, *ibid.*).

6. Israel Embassy in Washington to G. Meir and J. Herzog. 28 October 1956

Coded Tel. WIA877; Inc.: 130.09/2311/12

Summary

The embassy transmits the substance of a conversation between Eban and Dulles, which was attended by the top State Department officials. Dulles informed Eban of the messages President Eisenhower had sent to Ben-Gurion, and expressed U.S. concern over the mass mobilisation of the reserves in Israel. Eban explained that it was a purely defensive measure in view of the dangers confronting Israel. Dulles countered that the existing situation on Israel's borders and in the Arab states did not justify a total mobilisation, and that if Israel had aggressive intentions this would be the ideal moment to act on them. Eban expressed regret over the fact that the United States had so little confidence in Israel's intentions.

Notes

1. See no. 4, note 3.
2. See Editorial Note no. 1.
3. In the Foreign Ministry only Golda Meir was a party to the secret. On the night of Saturday 27 October, she informed the senior staff at the ministry about the war that was about to break out. Absolute secrecy was maintained until the very last moment, and even the Israeli ambassadors, including those in Washington, Paris and London, knew nothing. This was despite the fact that a week earlier all of them had been in Jerusalem for routine consultations.
4. On the morning of 29 October Jacob Herzog wanted to send Eban a cable in order to acquaint him with the full picture, but Ben-Gurion's military adjutant, Nehemia Argov, prevented it due to the security risk involved (Interview with Herzog, *Ha'aretz,* 28 November 1966).

   In urgent cables Eban sent Ben-Gurion and Meir after his conversation with Dulles (see no. 7 below) he expressed his frustration over the situation in which he found himself.

7. A. Eban (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion. 28 October 1956

Coded Tel. WIA876; Outg.: 93.01/2213/11

Summary

Following his conversation with Dulles,[1] Eban expresses his frustration regarding the impossible position in which he has been placed vis-à-vis the U.S. Administration. He faults Ben-Gurion for not informing him of the preparations for the upcoming war, and insists on being told what is really happening and how to respond.[3]

Notes

1. No. 6.
2. See Editorial Note no. 5.
3. A similar cable was sent to the foreign minister the following day (Tel. 883, 29 October 1956, 130.09/2311/12), to which she responded as follows:
"For reasons of caution that you understand, we could not and cannot now tell you details of everything that is going on at the moment. We thought of sending you a special messenger, but were not able to do so" (Tel. 606, 29 October 1956, 130.09/2311/10). Despite his entreaties Eban received no further information until after the outbreak of the war, of which he learned only during a conversation with Rountree at the State Department about President Eisenhower's message to Ben-Gurion. Rountree even remarked to him that the new information that had been received regarding the IDF's invasion of Sinai rendered their conversation academic (A. Eban: *The Political Battle in the U.N. and in the United States* [Hebrew; henceforward: *The Political Battle*], p. 4, unpublished work in file 130.02/2458/18).

8. Editorial Note

The Hungarian Revolt (24 October–4 November 1956)

On 24 October open rebellion erupted in Budapest, with the support of army and police units. The rebellion was the culmination of growing ferment in the local communist party, among student and intellectual circles and subsequently among the working classes. Demands were raised for democratisation and national sovereignty.

A new all-party government was established in Budapest under the leadership of Imre Nagy. Following the revolt and Hungary's subsequent withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union decided to intervene directly to crush the rebellion.

Nagy appealed to the Western states and the U.N. for assistance. On 28 October the American delegation to the U.N. sent an official request to all members of the U.N. from Western Europe, the British Commonwealth, South America and some Asian states, including Israel, asking them to write an urgent letter to the president of the Security Council expressing their concern over the situation in Hungary and their support for referring the matter to the Security Council (see Kidron to the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, Tel. 777, 28 October 1956, 130.09/2333/2). On the same day it was decided to hold a debate on the Hungarian crisis, and the General Assembly issued a condemnation of the Soviet Union for its aggressive interference in Hungary, but no other assistance was provided to the rebels.

On 4 November Soviet tank units burst into Budapest and crushed the Hungarian people's revolution. The democratic government was overthrown by the Soviet armed forces. Nagy was deposed, and Soviet loyalist Janos Kadar formed a "puppet" Communist Government.

9. Message from Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower (Washington). 29 October 1956

Copy: 130.02/2401/13

Note

1. The dispute over Egypt's nationalisation of the Suez Canal was discussed in the Security Council on 5 October at the initiative of Great Britain and France. The joint proposal they raised for discussion was designed to persuade Nasser to agree to international supervision of the Canal.
   With the mediation of U.N. Secretary-General Hammarskjöld, six principles were formulated for operating the Canal which were agreeable to all sides. In addition, Britain and France demanded that Egypt cooperate with the Suez Canal Users Association (which had been established a short time previously — see Vol. 11, no. 459), and conclude arrangements that would guarantee the association effective oversight of the Canal. In a Security Council vote held on 14 October the six principles were unanimously approved by council members, but the second part of the resolution failed due to a Soviet veto.

10. A. Eban (Washington) to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 29 October 1956

Coded Tel. WIA892; Outg.: 93.01/2213/11

Summary

Eban reports that a special meeting of senior U.S. Administration officials was held at the White House to discuss Israel's attack on Egypt.[1] Reports on the meeting state that Eisenhower feels a deep crisis of confidence with Israel, and his personal trust in the prime minister has been undermined. Israel's disregard of the president's personal messages offended him deeply. The Administration is convinced that Israel deliberately took action in the period preceding the elections in order to exploit the situation. The possibility was raised of convening a special session of Congress, and of the president making a speech to the nation on television. The prevailing assumption in the Administration is that Israel has deliberately initiated an all-out war. In the current state of affairs, it is possible that the U.S. declaration of 9 April 1956 that it would support any nation that was attacked in the Middle East,[2] which was designed to protect Israel, could be turned against it.

There is considerable embarrassment among U.S. Jews; they feel distressed by the fact that they were told nothing before the start of the war, and that the reasons behind it and the causes of the war were not explained to them. The heads of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations have been called in for consultations.

Notes

1. Compare Memorandum of a Conference with the President, written by Col. Goodpaster, the president's personal assistant, *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 411, pp. 833–839.
2. President Eisenhower's announcement was published in April 1956 on Hammarskjöld's departure for the Middle East on a mission intended to ease the severe tension in the region.The announcement stated that the United States would oppose all aggression in the region in accordance with its obligations as formulated in the U.N. charter, and would support any country that fell victim to such aggression (see Vol. 11, no. 200). On the night of 29 October the White House issued a statement by President Eisenhower in which he reiterated the above U.S. commitment (see *The Sinai Campaign, A Collection of Selected Documents*, p. 7, 130.02/2448/14).
3. The U.S. presidential and congressional elections were scheduled for November. The president was in the middle of a campaign trip when he heard the first reports of the IDF invasion of Sinai. He broke off the trip and returned immediately to Washington.
4. See nos. 2 and 4.

5. Abba Hillel Silver, a Conservative rabbi and Zionist leader, was one of the few Jewish leaders in the United States who supported the Republican Party. He was close to the president's assistant, Sherman Adams.
6. On 11–12 December 1955, following frequent Syrian harassment of Israeli fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, Israel carried out an extensive retaliatory raid on the southern part of the lake shore. Syrian outposts in Mas'udiya and Al-Kursi were emptied and bombed, and dozens of Syrian soldiers were killed or injured. During the course of the operation six IDF soldiers were killed and twelve were wounded. The Sea of Galilee operation evoked considerable criticism in Israel, along with sharp differences of opinion between Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and then Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, and sparked fierce condemnation of Israel overseas.
7. The heads of the important U.S. Jewish organisations were members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations.
8. Reuven Shiloah described the impressions of a White House confidant concerning the mood in Administration circles:
   A. The president is very angry at Israel. He claims that Israel pulled the wool over his eyes and exploited the delicate situation on the eve of the elections. B. On the other hand, there are high hopes that Israel will deal Nasser a painful blow. C. The operating assumption in the White House is that Israel acted with the agreement of and in coordination with France. D. The principal fear is that things will go wrong and the crisis will continue, which would induce the Administration to adopt an anti-Israel line. E. Nasser should therefore be dealt a lightning blow in order to liquidate the crisis quickly (see Shiloah to Herzog, WIA895, 30 October 1956, 93.01/2213/11).

11. Editorial Note

The Security Council Convenes. Veto and Deadlock, Transfer of Deliberations to an Emergency Session of the U.N. General Assembly (30 October–1 November 1956)

Upon conclusion of the special consultations at the White House (see no. 10), it was decided that the United States would demand that the Security Council convene immediately and would propose measures to bring an immediate halt to the Israeli operation in Egypt (see *The Political Battle,* p. 17).

The Security Council met on 30 October. The U.S. representative, Henry Cabot Lodge, expressed his government's dismay over the launching of the Israeli operation less than 24 hours after President Eisenhower's second appeal to Ben-Gurion (see no. 4). In its draft resolution the United States demanded that the Council take immediate steps to compel Israel to pull its forces back behind the armistice lines, and that all U.N. members refrain from furnishing any military, economic or financial aid to Israel until the latter responded to the Security Council's demand and complied with its decision (see *The Sinai Campaign, A Collection of Selected Documents*, p. 9, 130.02/2448/14).

At the same time Eisenhower continued to exert pressure on Ben-Gurion to withdraw from Sinai, without using the conventional channels of communication between heads of state. The president conveyed his fury at Ben-Gurion by refraining from making any contact with Israeli representatives in Washington or with the prime minister himself during the first 48 hours of the war. Instead he approached Ben-Gurion a number of times through the offices of the veteran Zionist leader Abba Hillel Silver (see no. 14).

Eban, who even at this point had still not been taken into the confidence of his government, sent a brief message to Eisenhower in the spirit of the instructions he had received from the Foreign Ministry. These were to justify the operation as a reprisal for recent Fedaiyun raids, and primarily to try to stall for time. Within a few hours, however, the picture began to change, as the Security Council was informed of the ultimatum presented by Britain and France to Israel and Egypt to move their forces away from the Suez Canal, as had been decided at the Sèvres conference. As expected, the ultimatum was accepted by Israel but rejected by Egypt. This revelation of the two Powers' participation in the Israeli campaign received dramatic confirmation in the Security Council's continuing deliberations, when Britain and France cast a veto against the Americans' proposed resolution, and subsequently against a similar proposal sponsored by the Soviet Union. The following day, the two Powers launched their active participation in the war, by bombarding Egyptian airports.

It quickly became clear that there was no chance of reaching a decision in the Security Council and no point in continuing the discussion there. The only way for the Americans to get support for active measures would be to circumvent the Council. This was accomplished by using the precedent of "Uniting for Peace," which had been employed for the first time during the Korean war, when U.N. support for the war had been obtained through a decision by the General Assembly. The Yugoslavian representative therefore introduced a proposal for an emergency session of the Assembly. Since the proposal was classified as procedural, it was impossible to veto it and it gained majority approval.

The emergency session of the Assembly convened on 1 November, and already the following day the American resolution, presented by Dulles, was approved by a large majority; 64 countries supported the resolution, while five opposed it: Britain, France, Israel, Australia and New Zealand. The resolution called on all sides involved in the hostilities to implement a cease-fire, for those countries that were signatories to the armistice agreements to withdraw their forces and abide by those agreements, and for all member states to refrain from introducing war materiel into the Middle East and to desist from actions that would exacerbate the situation. In addition, it called for reopening the Suez Canal and restoring freedom of navigation. With regard to its own activities, the Assembly decided not to disperse until a solution was found for the Middle East crisis.

The wording of the General Assembly's resolution was as follows:

GAOR, 1st Emergency Session, 997 (ES–1) 2.11.1956

The General Assembly,

Noting the disregard on many occasions by parties to the Israel-Arab Armistice Agreements of 1949 of the terms of such agreements, and that the armed forces of Israel have penetrated deeply into Egyptian territory in violation of the General Armistice Agreement between Egypt and Israel of 24 February 1949,

Noting that armed forces of France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are conducting military operations against Egyptian territory,

Noting that traffic through the Suez Canal is now interrupted to the serious prejudice of many nations,

Expressing its grave concern over these developments.

1. *Urges* as a matter of priority that all parties now involved in hostilities in the area agree to an immediate cease-fire and, as part thereof, halt the movement of military forces and arms into the area;
2. *Urges* the parties to the armistice agreements promptly to withdraw all forces behind the armistice lines, to desist from raids across the armistice lines into neighboring territory, and to observe scrupulously the provisions of all the armistice agreements;
3. *Recommends* that all Member States refrain from introducing military goods in the area of hostilities and in general refrain from any acts which would delay or prevent the implementation of the present Resolution;
4. *Urges* that, upon the cease-fire being effective, steps be taken to reopen the Suez Canal and restore secure freedom of navigation;
5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to observe and report promptly on the compliance with the present Resolution to the Security Council and to the General Assembly, for such further action as they may deem appropriate in accordance with the Charter;
6. *Decides* to remain in emergency session pending compliance with the present Resolution.

12. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Meir. 29 October 1956

Coded Tel. WIA893; Outg.: 93.01/2213/4

Summary

Eban informs the foreign minister that the Security Council is to convene the next morning. He wants to know what Israel's intentions are with regard to the

withdrawal of its forces from Sinai,[1] an essential step in order to prevent Israel from being defined as the aggressor by the Security Council.

Note

1. See Editorial Note no. 11.

13. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 30 October 1956

Coded Tel. TNW562; Inc.: 130.02/2401/13

Notes

1. General Eedson Burns, chief of staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation in Palestine. As of 5 November he became the commander of the U.N. emergency force (UNEF).
2. Article 2 of the Israeli-Egyptian Armistice Agreement states that no part of the forces of either side will undertake any hostile action against the other side, nor will they advance beyond the cease-fire lines.
3. In May 1956 the Security Council discussed the report submitted by Hammarskjöld regarding his April mission to the Middle East (see no. 10, note 2). On 4 June the Council passed a resolution, based on a British proposal, calling on Israel and the Arab states to adhere to the armistice agreements and to implement the measures suggested by the secretary-general during his visit to the region (see Vol. 11, Editorial Note no. 240).

14. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 30 October 1956

Coded Tel. XA789; Outg.: 93.01/2213/11

Summary

Eban reports that Eisenhower had sent Ben-Gurion a message by way of Silver. The president suggests that Israel agree to withdraw to the border immediately, given that it had accomplished its mission of destroying the Fedaiyun bases. Should it do so, he would immediately issue a declaration of friendship and appreciation for Israel.[1] The president believes that despite the convergence of Israel's interests with those of France and Great Britain at this moment, Israel's strength and future are connected rather with the United States.

Note

1. In a broadcast speech to the nation, which Eisenhower was due to give on 31 October.

15. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 30 October 1956

Coded Circular Tel. 236; Outg.: 130.02/2401/13

Summary

Nicholls[1] has informed the foreign minister that the British ambassador in Amman had passed on to the Jordanian government Israel's promise not to attack Jordan so long as it refrained from attacking Israel. If Jordan were to launch an attack, Britain would not consider itself obliged to come to Jordan's assistance in keeping with the 1948 agreement between them.[2]

As for the Tripartite Declaration,[3] since Nasser has announced that he does not recognise the Great Powers' right to intervene in the region, Egypt has forfeited its right to claim intervention by the three Powers under the Tripartite Declaration even if it now regrets its previous declarations. Britain has not been advised of the opinion of the other two Powers on this matter.

Notes

1. John Nicholls, the British ambassador to Israel.
2. Article 5 of the Sèvres agreement states that Israel promises not to attack Jordan during the operation against Egypt, but if Jordan attacks Israel, the British government promises not to come to the assistance of Jordan (see Vol. 11, no. 500, see also Editorial Note 1).
3. See no. 4, note 2.

16. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division. 30 October 1956

Coded Tel 878; Inc.: 130.09/2347/2

Summary

Tsur relates that the French Foreign Ministry has instructed the French delegation to the U.N. to veto any anti-Israel resolution that is raised in the Security Council.

He reports displays of sympathy for Israel among the public and press in France. The Socialist party is expressing reservations over government policy, for fear the government will exploit Israel in order to advance its own interests.

There is embarrassment in various quarters in France in view of the weakness of the justification for the Israeli offensive. Tsur is of the opinion that Israel needs to upgrade its public relations campaign in France and to stress the dangers posed to it by the Arab countries, particularly after the establishment of the unified command of Egypt, Jordan and Syria.[1]

Note

1. See Editorial Note no. 1.

17. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 31 October 1956

Uncoded Circular Tel. 238; Outg.: 130.02/2401/13

Summary

A government spokesman states that the foreign minister has informed the British and French envoys in the name of the government that she has received their joint request to the governments of Israel and Egypt for a cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of military forces to a distance of 10 miles from the Suez Canal. In response to this request, the government of Israel announces its decision to accept these conditions, with regard to both time and territory, and announces its willingness to take practical steps in this direction. The Israel government's announcement was based on the assumption that a positive response would be received from Egypt as well.[1]

Note

1. Israel responded in accordance with the agreement reached at the Sèvres conference, which was included in article 2 of the agreement (see Vol. 11, no. 500). Egypt was expected to refuse to comply with the demand to withdraw from the Canal, and its refusal was to serve as a pretext for British and French intervention and for the start of the campaign in Egypt.

18. M. Kidron (New York) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 31 October 1956

Coded Tel. X797; Inc.: 130/09/2333/2

Summary

Kidron relates that the British-French military campaign in Egypt is to be discussed at the emergency session of the General Assembly, along with the Israeli operation in Sinai.

He raises a number of questions. Should Israel participate in the debate? In his judgment it is very important to do so, for failure to participate would prevent Israel from presenting its case to the U.N. If Britain and France announce that the emergency special session of the Assembly is illegal, should Israel also adopt this position? And what should Israel do in the event that Britain and France refuse to recognise the Assembly's decision?

Kidron suggests that the line Israel adopts in the Assembly be identical to that which it adopted in the Security Council. He requests further guidance from the ministry.[1]

Note

1. The Israel missions abroad were only sent detailed instructions on how to justify the Sinai Campaign on 31 October — see no. 19. The reply to Kidron was sent a day later; see no. 21.

19. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 31 October 1956

Coded Circular Tel. 245; 130.02/2401/13

Summary

Public relations guidelines from the Foreign Ministry to the Israel missions[1]:

Israel has acceded to the French and British requests for a ceasefire and for a troop withdrawal to a distance of 10 miles from the Canal. Egypt has refused.

The purpose of Israel's operation is to eliminate the concentrations of Fedaiyun and their training and launching bases, which are part of the Egyptian army. Since previous retaliatory raids did not achieve their objectives, Israel has decided on a more thoroughgoing operation. Under no circumstances should this operation be defined as a war.

The provocative and subversive character of the Nasser regime and the circumstances that drove Israel to act should be emphasised; Egypt's obstinate adherence to a state of war with Israel and the economic crusade being waged against it, including the blockade of the Straits of Tiran and the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli navigation.

Any coordination between the Israeli campaign and the English-French one should be vehemently denied.

Note

1. See also the telegram to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circular Tel. 254, sent on 1 November (in file 130.09/2377/4), which states that the convening of the emergency session of the Assembly mandates a supreme and immediate effort to explain Israel's position to foreign ministries and the public, according to the circumstances in each country.

20. A. Eban (New York) to the Prime Minister and G. Meir. 31 October 1956

Coded Tel. XA793; Outg.: 93.01/2213/11

Summary

Eban has spoken with former Governor Dewey following the latter's meeting with President Eisenhower. In his opinion, the president's relations with Israel are in

the balance. Eisenhower is about to give an address to the nation which is liable to be severely critical of Israel, but he is willing to soften his remarks and express a positive and friendly attitude toward Israel if the latter commits itself to withdrawing from Sinai and returning to the international border. In the wake of a warning from the Pentagon about possible direct Soviet intervention in the Middle East, the president asked Dewey if Israel is aware of this danger.

Despite the nadir in the relations between the two countries, the numerous overtures to Israel from the White House through unofficial channels[1] attest to a wish to patch things up.

Eban eagerly awaits a response from Jerusalem.[2]

Notes

1. The reference is to President Eisenhower's approaches to Abba Hillel Silver, both through Sherman Adams and directly, to pass on his message to Ben-Gurion (see Eban to Meir and Ben-Gurion, XA791, 31 October 1956, 130.01/2213/11, see also no. 14).
2. In response to this telegram the foreign minister wrote to Eban as follows: "We understand very well the meaning of strained relations, however temporary, with the United States. But surely it is inconceivable for us to withdraw our troops before realising the objective. It should be clear to everyone that we did not undertake this operation in order to withdraw and again leave a territorial vacuum to serve as a staging ground for Nasser's depredations. It seems to me that if we are successful — and developments so far give grounds for optimism — the U.S. will also be mollified, and we will have resolved some of our gravest problems. The operation is exacting a high price in the lives of our boys, although to date only a few have fallen. A people that is willing to pay this price must also be willing to suffer economically. But I am certain that the U.S. position will change" (see Meir to Eban, TNW 581, 1 November 1956, 130.02/2459/1).

21. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (Washington). 31 October 1956

Coded Tel. TNW571; Outg.: 130/09/2312/9

Summary

Herzog transmits Ben-Gurion's reply to the message from President Eisenhower:[1]

He is ready to bring to the government a proposal to withdraw the army to the international border, if Nasser signs a peace agreement including clear guarantees of desistance from hostile action against Israel: the disbanding of the Fedaiyun,

ending the economic boycott, the elimination of the blockade in the Gulf of Aqaba and in the Suez Canal and abstention from military alliances against Israel.

Since the Israeli campaign has dovetailed with the British and French operations in Egypt, fairness and mutual interest would seem to require consultation with their governments as well.

The prime minister hopes that the president will not view Israel's current operation as damaging to U.S.-Israel friendship. Israel fully understands to what extent its interests are linked to those of the United States.

Nasser thwarted the serious attempt Eisenhower had made to bring peace to the Middle East by sending his personal emissary to the region.[2] This is proof of the untrustworthy and subversive nature of the Egyptian regime.

He calls on the president to view recent developments from the perspective of the potential for permanent solutions in the region.[3]

Notes

1. See no. 14.
2. The reference is to Robert Anderson, a former deputy secretary of defense and Eisenhower's personal friend. The president dispatched Anderson as a special emissary to the Middle East (January–March 1956) to ascertain whether it was possible to promote direct contact between the sides and bring about an end to the conflict. His mission was a failure (see Vol. 11, introduction, nos. 54, 144).
3. Following the receipt of Ben-Gurion's reply Silver reported that it was received sympathetically, although the Americans had serious doubts as to whether they would be able to obtain written commitments from Nasser. Eisenhower's broadcast speech (see no. 20) was originally intended to be harsh and to stake out a position from which it would be hard to retreat. However, according to Sherman Adams, as a result of Ben-Gurion's reply the speech that was actually given was moderate in tone and devoid of bitterness toward Israel (see Eban to the prime minister and Meir, Tel. 905, 1 November 1956, 30.09/2311/12). Eisenhower even mentioned the Egyptian provocations, thereby ascribing some of the responsibility for the crisis to Nasser.

22. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 1 November 1956

Coded Tel. TNW580; Outg.: 130.09/2339/7

Summary

In response to the embassy's request,[1] the Foreign Ministry transmits guidelines for Israel's participation in the emergency special session of the U.N. Assembly.[2] Israel should participate in the discussion and not declare in advance that it refuses

to recognise any decisions that may be forthcoming, but should also stress that from its own standpoint there is no legal or moral basis for holding this session.

Israel must take an offensive rather than a defensive stance. It should describe Arab warfare against it in all its various guises, and condemn the appeasement strategy of the Great Powers and other countries with regard to this warfare. The U.N. has never compelled Egypt to observe its prior resolutions condemning Egypt's prevention of Israeli navigation in the Suez Canal, Arab attacks on Israel and the failure to hold direct peace negotiations between the two sides (in accordance with the political committee's resolution of 1952).[5]

Notes

1. See no. 18.
2. See Editorial Note no. 11 on the Security Council resolution to convene a special session of the General Assembly.
3. Security Council resolution S/2322 adopted in September 1951 called on Egypt to cancel its illegal restrictions on the passage of Israeli ships in the Suez Canal.
4. In this telegram Eytan traced the outlines for a public statement by Israel in response to an anti-Israeli declaration by the Afro-Asian bloc at the emergency special session of the General Assembly. Egypt and Indonesia sponsored the declaration.
   The following is Eytan's proposed statement:
   (1) It is Egypt which has disavowed its international obligations as specified in the U.N. Charter, the armistice agreements and Security Council resolutions; (2) the Afro-Asian states have forfeited the moral right to decide between Israel and Egypt by excluding Israel from the Bandung Conference (see Vol. 9, no. 572, note 1) and failing to make any effort to restrain Egypt; (3) the Afro-Asian bloc never saw fit to respond in the U.N. to Egypt's threats and its policies dedicated to the destruction of Israel; (4) Israel has adopted an active defence against Egypt's depredations, which have been perpetrated against it for years; (5) the choice of time and place was forced on Israel by Egypt; (6) there are important parties and personages in Asia and Africa who are aware of the dangers posed by Nasser's imperialism; (7) a number of statesmen have done their best to rectify the grave injustice embodied in the Afro-Asian bloc's policy toward Israel (see Eytan to Eban, Tel. TNW579, 1 November 1956, 130.09/2339/7).
5. Israel sponsored this resolution on direct negotiations together with several states in Western Europe and South America (see Vol. 7, introduction, pp. xix–xx).

23. A. Eban (New York) to G. Meir. 1 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA168; Outg.: 93/01/2213/5

Summary

Eban summarises the differences between the General Assembly's resolution[1] and the proposed resolution presented to the Security Council:

The sentence calling for denying Israel aid until it had carried out the withdrawal was deleted; a sentence was inserted to the effect that the Arab countries have also violated the armistice agreements and not only Israel, through its incursion into Sinai; a distinction is drawn between a cease-fire and the return of troops to behind the armistice lines. The resolution "recommends" and "urges" rather than "calls upon," and no precise dates or times are stipulated for the cease-fire or the withdrawal of troops.

He proposes agreeing to a cease-fire, since this call is directed toward all parties. This would require consultations with Britain and France as well.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 11.
2. See no. 25.

24. S. Arad (Washington) to the United States Division. 1 November 1956

Orig. 130.20/2478/2

Summary

Arad sums up the contacts held with the State Department since the beginning of the campaign:

1) The Bergus[1]-Meroz conversation regarding the delivery of Eisenhower's message to Ben-Gurion by Lawson.
2) The Rountree-Eban-Shiloah conversation about the mobilisation of the reserves in Israel. Receipt of the report of the beginning of the Israeli offensive in Sinai during the course of the conversation. The meeting with Sisco was cancelled, and all contact with the State Department was broken off until 31 October.

3) The Bergus-Meroz-Arad conversation concerning the evacuation of American citizens from Israel and the possibility of a cease-fire.
4) Conversations held by Abraham Salmon with officials in charge of economic affairs. Troxel told him that all projects involving economic aid were suspended.

Notes

1. Donald Bergus, officer in charge of Israel-Jordan affairs in the Office of Near Eastern Affairs in the Department of State.
2. See no. 13.
3. The number of the telegram is missing in the original. The reference is apparently to the telegram sent to Israel missions abroad (Coded Circular Tel. 257, in file 130.09/2377/4), which contains details of the conversation the foreign minister held with Burns on 30 October. During the conversation Burns asked whether there was any reply yet to his message.

25. A. Eban (New York) to G. Meir. 1 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA167; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

In a talk with Eban, Dulles requested clarifications concerning Israel's objectives in Sinai and the chances for a withdrawal. Eban replied that Israel would not consider an unconditional return to the previous state of affairs, but rather mutual commitments by Israel and Egypt.

Israel proposes that the United States exploit Nasser's weakness and the erosion of the Soviet position in the Middle East to create a new regional order and exert pressure for peace. Dulles raised possible conditions, such as the removal of the blockade, in return for Israel's withdrawal.

There was no discussion on the topic of the suspension of projects of economic assistance to Israel.[1]

Notes

1. Although the United States never officially announced that it was cutting off economic assistance to Israel, in practice all aid was suspended. The departure of a delegation to Israel from the Export-Import Bank, which was supposed to recommend a loan of $75 million, was called off, and negotiations on the implementation of the Grant-in-Aid and the Food Surplus Law were cancelled. The members of the aid delegation already in Israel (USOM) were also ordered to leave by the State Department (see

the United States division to the Israel embassy in Washington, Tel. 573, 1 November 1956, 130.09/2312/9. Compare also *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 447, pp. 890–891).

2. According to Eban, Dulles did indeed make changes both in his speech in the General Assembly and the draft resolution he introduced in the wake of this conversation. He added to the resolution a paragraph on freedom of navigation and against aggression, and in his address he mentioned that there would be no return to the status quo (*The Political Battle*, p. 28).

26. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 1 November 1956

Coded Tel. 825; Outg.: 130.09/2321/4

Summary

Elath spoke to British Foreign Secretary Lloyd, who said that his government stood firmly behind its decision to adhere to the implications of the veto it had cast in the Security Council in order to prevent an unjust condemnation of Israel.

Elath spelled out Israel's war objectives, which dovetail nicely with Britain's interests in the Middle East. These interests will sustain damage so long as chaos prevails in the region. Nasser has succeeded in exploiting this chaos for his own purposes, primarily due to the lack of a consistent policy towards him on the part of the West.

Lloyd raised the topic of relations with Iraq, and his fear that the latter would be swept up in the pro-Egyptian fervour. Elath argued that Iraq has never even concluded a cease-fire agreement with Israel, and it openly threatens Israel.[1] This is why Israel opposes the stationing of an Iraqi army in Jordan.[2]

Lloyd asked for a public declaration by Israel that it has no intention of holding on to the territories it has seized from Egypt, as Britain needs such a statement for the sake of its relations with the Arab countries. Elath replied that Israel will not relinquish its military gains until it knows for certain what its relations with Egypt will be on all fronts. Under no circumstances will Israel agree to revert to the former state of affairs.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 1.
2. *Ibid.*

27. Y. Nahmias (Paris) to S. Peres. 1 November 1956

Coded Tel. 657; Inc.: IMDEA 2704

Summary

Nahmias reports on a message that Mollet sent to Ben-Gurion to allay his apprehensions concerning the delay in starting the British-French military operation.[1] Mollet blames Britain[2] and promises that if Israel had been attacked France would not have left it to face the aggressor alone. To strengthen his argument he reminds Ben-Gurion of the tremendous support in the French parliament for the government's policy.

Notes

1. According to the Sèvres agreement, Britain and France were supposed to start bombing the Egyptian airports upon the expiration of the ultimatum presented to Israel and Egypt, 12 hours after its presentation. The ultimatum was presented on 30 October at 18:00, and it expired at 6:00 in the morning the next day. But the offensive did not begin. Ben-Gurion's anxiety and anger over the French and British failure to keep the agreement grew as the hours passed, since this meant that Israeli cities were exposed to attack from the Egyptian air force, which was unharmed, for an entire day. Moreover, if the two Powers were to renege on their commitments at this stage of the war, Israel would be cast in the role of sole aggressor in the eyes of the world and the U.N. What infuriated Ben-Gurion the most was Eden's unreliability, which confirmed his suspicions about the British premier. Ben-Gurion even considered recalling the paratroopers from the Mitla Pass and breaking off combat before Israel got into trouble.
2. Britain's claim was that its planes, which had been on reconnaissance flights over Egypt, encountered anti-aircraft fire from the ground. It was therefore decided to delay the beginning of the air strikes until dark, in order not to endanger the attacking planes. Peres replied: "The superiority enjoyed by the Egyptians, which Eden suddenly discovered, exists with regard to our own forces as well. This places a number of our units in an extremely complex position. We consider the delay in the onset of operations as a serious act of sabotage. We demand unequivocally that instructions be given to start the operation immediately" (see Peres to Nahmias, F 806, 31 October 1956, Peres Archives, Outgoing Telegrams File, IMDEA. The telegram is quoted in M. Bar-On, *The Gates of Gaza*, p. 262).

28. Y. Nahmias (Paris) to S. Peres. 1 November 1956

Coded Tel. 656; Inc.: IMDEA 2704

Summary

Nahmias reports that Thomas[1] has dispatched emissaries to London in order to impress on the British government the importance of bombing the Egyptian airports.[2] Thomas proposed bringing forward the main landing of English-French forces in Egypt, and even parachuting in a reduced number of troops without additional delay. He also promised that a British or French warship would be stationed in the Straits of Tiran for protection against Egyptian naval action.[7]

Notes

1. Abel Thomas, director-general of the French Defence Ministry.
2. See no. 27, note 2.
3. The dramatic measures in the Security Council and the U.N. General Assembly, and particularly the Assembly's call for a cease-fire, meant that Israel, Britain and France were now in a race against time. While Israel speeded up the pace of the fighting, completing its conquest of Sinai with the capture of Sharm el-Sheikh on November 5, Britain and France were still adhering to the original date, which called for them to land in Egypt on November 6.
   After the resolution was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, Hammarskjöld demanded a clear answer from all parties to the combat regarding the timing of a cease-fire. France, which had already felt the need to speed up the military campaign from the outset of the Assembly's emergency session, put pressure on Britain to bring forward the attack on Egypt, and to drop paratroopers 36 hours before the landing forces reached the site. France also suggested using IDF forces in Sinai as cover for the paratroopers. Britain rejected these ideas outright.
4. See Peres to Nahmias F 814, 31 October 1956, Peres Archives, Outgoing Telegram File, IMDEA.
5. Admiral Pierre Barjot, commander in chief of the French invasion forces for "Operation Musketeer," the code name for the Anglo-French operation against Egypt.
6. André Martin, who was responsible for coordinating cooperation in French and Israeli air operations.
7. A British-French squadron stationed in the area of the Straits of Tiran was supposed to assist the campaign in the Canal region, within the framework of Operation Musketeer. On 30 October the British duly located and sank an Egyptian ship carrying Egyptian reinforcements, which was on its way from Suez to Sharm el-Sheikh. They thereby pre-empted the Israeli Air Force, which was ordered to attack any ship in the region likely to disrupt Israel's conquest of the Straits.

29. D. Ben-Gurion to K. Adenauer (Bonn). 1 November 1956

Copy: 130.10/2543/11

Note

1. The Bonn government had published an announcement on 31 October 1956. See also no. 42.

30. Y. Shimoni (Rangoon) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 November 1956

Coded Tel. 581; Inc.: 130.09/2360/10

Summary

In a conversation with the Burmese foreign minister, Shimoni expressed his surprise at Burma's implied participation in the anti-Israel manifesto published by the Afro-Asian bloc in the U.N.[1] The foreign minister claimed that he was completely unaware of the declaration, and that Burma's representative to the U.N. had received no instructions from him to support it.

Shimoni contends that the foreign minister lacks influence, and that possibly it was the prime minister who gave the directive, without informing the foreign minister.

The Burmese press is sympathetic to Israel, although it does not reflect any solid consensus of public opinion.

Notes

1. See no. 22, note 2.
2. U Ba Swe was prime minister of Burma at the time, and not as stated in this document.
3. Already on 31 October Shimoni had been sent a copy of Kidron's telegram on the subject: "The declaration was formulated by the Indian representative, Lall [permanent representative of India to the United Nations], and was issued to the press by the Indonesian envoy, who was the rotating president of the bloc. I asked Paw Htin, the Burmese representative [secretary of the Burmese permanent mission to the U.N.], how he explains his participation in this distortion of the truth. He is young and inexperienced, and was embarrassed by my question. He said that he had not signed anything, and that the matter was organised by the Indonesian and the Egyptian representatives so

rapidly that, in practice, he had no control over it (see the Asian and African division to the Israel missions in Bombay and Rangoon, 31 October 1956, 130.09/2360/9).

4. Sharett was in Bombay at the time, as the head of the Israel delegation to the second conference of the socialist movements in Asia. He was asked by the Foreign Ministry to meet with U Ba Swe in order to express Israel's protest at the participation of the Burmese government in the U.N. Afro-Asian bloc's declaration which distorted the truth (see Levin to the Israel legation in Rangoon, Tel. 880, 1 November 1956, 130.09/2360/8). Sharett did speak with U Ba Swe, who subsequently issued a positive statement about Israel, in contrast to Nehru's declarations at the conference (see the Asian and African division to the Israel permanent mission to the U.N., Tel. 758, 4 November 1956, 130.09/2332/2).

31. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Meir. 2 November 1956

Coded Tel. WIA923; Outg.: 93.01/2188/1

Summary

Eban insists that he be consulted before a response is issued to the Assembly resolution.[1] The resolution is only a recommendation, and does not require withdrawal before a number of conditions are fulfilled. The resolution also does not require the pullback of Egyptian forces to anywhere.

Israel should coordinate its response with the other two forces involved in the fighting, in consultation with them, since the resolution refers to the need for the parties to agree to a cease-fire. There is therefore no need for haste in responding.

If the remaining stages of combat are executed rapidly and successfully, there is a chance that the United States will move closer to the position of Britain, France and Israel.

Notes

1. On November 2 Hammarskjöld conveyed the wording of the Assembly resolution to the U.N. delegates of Israel, France and Britain, and asked to be informed as soon as possible of its implementation.
2. For article 2 of the Assembly resolution, see Editorial Note no. 11.
3. The telegram was not found.
4. On November 2 Hammarskjöld announced the appointment of a three-member committee to update him on a daily basis concerning the implementation of the resolution. The committee members were the two under-secretaries, Ralph Bunche and Ilya Tchernychev, and U.N. legal counsel Constantin Stavropoulos.

32. M. Kidron (New York) to G. Meir. 2 November 1956

Coded Tel. X804; Outg.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Kidron reports on the speeches by the Chinese and U.S. representatives, which caused a radical transformation in the attitude of the U.N. representatives of several South American countries toward Israel. They distinguish between Israel and Britain and France, whom they roundly condemn. They relate more sympathetically to Israel, and insist that the current crisis should serve as a springboard for efforts to make peace.

Several pro-Israel articles were also published in the *New York Times*.

33. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (Washington). 2 November 1956

Coded Tel. 639; Outg.: 130.09/2311/10

Summary

Golda Meir announces the departure of Teddy Kollek, Nahman Karni and Avraham Harman for the United States, in order to assist in the public relations campaign among the U.S. Jews.

Now that the resolution has passed the Assembly, and since Israel will not carry out all that is required of it and will be under great pressure, the Jews need to make themselves heard quickly and clearly.[1] Timing is also important — it is now a few days before the presidential elections, and if U.S. Jews take a stand it is likely to influence the Administration's position toward Israel.

Mass demonstrations should be encouraged in all major cities, and Jewish leaders and organisations should publish pro-Israel declarations.

Notes

1. See no. 34.
2. The U.S. presidential elections.

34. A. Harman (Jerusalem) to R. Halprin (New York). 2 November 1956

Coded Tel. 740; Outg.:130.02/2459/1

Summary

Harman complains that since the beginning of the crisis not a single word of encouragement or solidarity has been forthcoming from U.S. Jews, neither from the Jewish Agency Executive nor from the Zionist General Council. Only now have there been a few preliminary expressions of support.

In view of Israel's situation, it is vital that encouraging Jewish voices be heard, and that world Jewry organise emergency fundraising appeals on behalf of Israel. The Jews must also mobilise in order to tell the world the truth about the Egyptian aggression.[2] With the approval of the government of Israel, the Jewish Agency and *Keren HaYesod* (Jewish Foundation Fund), telegrams have been sent to Jewish communities around the world asking them to organise emergency appeals on Israel's behalf.[3]

Notes

1. Lipsky arrived for a visit in Israel on 30 October, and announced that he had come despite U.S. warnings to its citizens not to travel to Israel.
2. Eban had a different opinion of the activities and involvement of U.S. Jewry. A telegram he sent Golda Meir that very day reads: "There is no Jewish leader or Jewish organisation that has not spoken out proudly, or will speak out by Sunday, and they suffer from no hesitation or lack of confidence in this regard. On the other hand, the topic has become a key issue for general public opinion. It is being discussed on every public and political platform, and there is no special news value to declarations by Jews in particular. In effect, then, this issue has become not one of the issues but the only issue of the elections in their final stage, and we need not confine ourselves to thinking exclusively in terms of a Jewish front" (see WIA 924, 2 November 1956, 93.01/2213/12. See also Kollek to the foreign minister, X832, 5 November 1956, 130.09/2333/3).
3. See the telegram from the West European division to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circular Tel. 252, 1 November 1956, 130.09/2377/4.

35. Israel Embassy in Moscow to the East European Division. 2 November 1956

Coded Tel. 658; Inc.: 130.09/2326/8

Summary

The embassy reports that all Soviet newspapers are carrying a statement by the Soviet government against the attack on Egypt[1] along with articles sharply condemning Israel, Britain and France. They also say that Israel has embarked on a path that is dangerous first and foremost to itself.

A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of the U.S.S.R. announced a Soviet initiative to reassemble the members of the Bandung conference,[2] in order to demand that the aggressors evacuate Egyptian soil.

The press is highlighting Syrian President al-Quwatli's visit to the U.S.S.R., and the regime's demonstrative expressions of friendship toward him.

Notes

1. In an announcement broadcast on Moscow Radio on October 31 the Soviets denounced "the armed aggression of the governments of Great Britain, France and Israel against the Egyptian people." The announcement stated that the path taken by Israel was criminal and dangerous first and foremost to the state of Israel and its future. All the responsibility for the attack on Egypt and its consequences is placed on the governments of Britain, France and Israel.
2. See Vol. 9, no. 572, note 1.

36. Statement by the Government of Israel. 3 November 1956

Copy: 130.02/2401/14

Notes

1. Following the General Assembly's resolution of 2 November regarding a cease-fire and withdrawal (see Editorial Note no. 11), the U.N. secretary-general exerted massive pressure on Israel, France and Britain to announce their compliance with the resolution. In a bid to mitigate the pressure on itself, since the Sinai operations had already been completed aside from the conquest of Sharm el-Sheikh, Israel was ready to agree. The IDF assumed that in any case it would take a number of hours for the cease-fire to take effect, and by then Sharm el-Sheikh would be in Israeli hands. At a special government meeting on 3 November a decision was made concerning the wording of Israel's reply.

After consultations in Israel and at the U.N. with British and French representatives (see Eytan to Eban, TNW 608, 3 November 1956, 130.09/2339/7, and also no. 46, note 1), Eban submitted the reply as an official government statement at the evening session of the General Assembly on 3 November. Israel's response was sent to the U.N. secretary-general as an aide mémoire the following day (see stenographic record of the government meeting, 3 November 1956, 77.0/9/30).

2. See no. 9, note 1.

37. A. Eban (New York) to the President of the Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly. 3 November 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/2

Notes

1. On November 1 Syria had announced a general mobilisation and declared its willingness to assist Egypt together with Jordan. See Editorial Note no. 1 on the establishment of the joint command of all three states.
2. On November 3 the Iraqi government had ordered Iraqi army units into Jordan following the Jordanian government's urgent request for assistance (see Editorial Note, *ibid.*).

38. United States Division (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 3 November 1956

Coded Tel. TNW611; Outg.: 130.09/2339/7

Summary

Foreign Minister Meir called in Ambassador Lawson and demanded that the U.S. Administration immediately issue a public response to the message it had received from Syria that Syria was about to act on its pact with Egypt.[2] She wondered why the United States did not react to a message whose import was that Syria was about to attack Israel. The receipt of the message imposed a weighty responsibility on the United States. Israel has no intentions of attacking Jordan or Syria, but obviously, if attacked Israel will defend itself with all its might. With regard to the entry of the Iraqi army into Jordan, the foreign minister reiterated Israel's position.[3]

She proposed that the U.S. representative speak out on this matter at the emergency special session of the Assembly. Lawson promised to cable the State Department immediately and request an immediate reply.[4]

Notes

1. See no. 37. Compare also *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 488, pp. 966–967.
2. The Syrian message was conveyed to Lampton Berry, undersecretary of state for the Near East and Africa, on 2 November (see *FRUS, ibid.*, note 2).
3. See Editorial Note no. 1.
4. Hoover answered Lawson on 4 November that the United States had no information about Syrian plans to attack Israel, only Syrian declarations that it would defend itself if attacked by Israel. He referred Israel to the General Assembly's resolutions of 2 November and 4 November mandating a cease-fire and the cessation of all military troop movements in the region. He also called on Israel to convey an assurance of its peaceful intentions to Syria and Jordan, by means of General Burns (see *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 490, p. 973).

39. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3 November 1956

Coded Tel. X813; Inc.: 130.09/2333/3

Summary

Kidron spoke with Crosthwaite,[1] who informed him that Iraqi and Syrian troops were already in Jordan and expressed apprehensions that the Jordanian government might be pushed into war whether it wanted or not.[2] In light of the ineffectiveness of the system of U.N. observers, Crosthwaite asked Kidron his opinion of the idea of stationing British officers on both sides of the border, or at least on the side of any party which would agree to accept them. Kidron rejected the proposal outright.

Notes

1. Ponsonby Crosthwaite, deputy permanent representative of Britain to the Security Council, alternate representative to the U.N. General Assembly.
2. On 3 November, after her conversation with Lawson (see no. 38), the foreign minister also spoke with the British ambassador to Israel, Nicholls, on the situation in Jordan, Syria and Iraq. Nicholls claimed that King Hussein, who feared an Israeli attack, had approached the Arab states for assistance, and that Syria had evidently consented to his request. The ambassador gave an evasive answer to the foreign minister's query about the entry of the Iraqis into Jordan and the difficulties involved, but he ventured the opinion that once the Egyptian threat was removed and Israel's security improved, there would presumably be less sensitivity to the movements of the Iraqis (see Shneerson to the Israel embassies in London, Paris and Washington, Coded Circular Tel. 288, 3 November 1956, 130.09/2377/4).

40. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 3 November 1956

Coded Tel. 830; Inc.: 130.13/2587/10

Summary

In the course of a conversation with Kirkpatrick,[1] Elath complained about the delays in the delivery of assorted types of weapons, including Meteor planes, which Israel had purchased in Great Britain. Kirkpatrick promised to help if it were possible to do so secretly.

Kirkpatrick said that Britain is meeting its obligation to carry out the combat plans as stipulated, and the aim of both Britain and France is not merely to defend the Suez Canal, but to overthrow Nasser.

As for the formation of an international force,[2] as proposed in the U.N. resolution, Elath was dubious regarding its likely effectiveness in carrying out the missions for which it was to be established. Kirkpatrick also reasoned that the governments of Britain and France would be in no hurry to implement the plan until all of the details were clarified. Until then they would keep control of the Canal in their own hands.

At the end of the conversation Kirkpatrick mentioned that he had received instructions from Lloyd to remain in close contact with Elath, and stated that Lloyd had emphasised his desire to improve relations between Britain and Israel.

Notes

1. Ivone Kirkpatrick, permanent undersecretary of the British Foreign Office.
2. See Editorial Note no. 45.

41. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division. 3 November 1956

Coded Tel. 160; Inc.: 130.09/2343/6

Summary

Tsur reports on his conversation with Joxe,[1] in which they discussed the reasons for the delay in the British-French landing in Egypt. In Joxe's view the cause was not political but operational, and Britain had not reneged on its obligations.

As for the U.N. force to be set up in accordance with the Canadian proposal[5] — Tsur expressed Israel's vehement opposition to the establishment of a new Truce

Supervision Organisation. Joxe voiced understanding for Israel's position, and promised that the force would not be stationed along the Israeli-Egyptian border, but only in the area of the Suez Canal or in Sinai.

Tsur raised the issue of the general situation in the Middle East, arguing that the time had come for a fundamental resolution of regional problems; Israel would demand a lasting peace within borders that would guarantee its security, and would not agree to revert to a regime of armistice agreements. Joxe concurred, as from France's standpoint it was now being given an opportunity to be an active force in the region, while relying openly on Israel.

Notes

1. Louis Joxe, director-general of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
2. After the departure of Generals Ely and Challe for London (see no. 28), Pineau followed them on 3 November and urged Britain to speed up the attack on Egypt by dropping paratroopers 36 hours before the arrival of the landing forces on the Egyptian coast.
3. The British and French representatives had submitted a statement to Hammarskjöld on 3 November regarding their response to the Assembly resolution. It declared that their governments were ready to agree to a cease-fire under the following conditions:
   A. The governments of Israel and Egypt would agree to the stationing of a U.N. force between the warring parties.
   B. The U.N. would take responsibility for the establishment and stationing of the force, which would remain in the area until Israel and the Arab states arrived at an agreement concerning conditions for peace and a satisfactory arrangement was reached for the Suez Canal. The U.N. would guarantee both of these agreements. Until the formation of the U.N. force the two sides would agree to the entry of units of an Anglo-French force that would operate in the name of the U.N., and would be positioned between the warring parties (see Nahmias to Peres, Tel. 178, 3 November 1956, 130.02/2459/1).
4. See no. 3 above.
5. See Editorial Note no. 45.
6. Sultan Muhammad V of Morocco, who became king of Morocco after independence.
7. Habib Bourguiba, the prime minister of Tunisia.

42. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 3 November 1956

Coded Tel; Inc.: 130.10/2543/11

Summary

Shinnar met with Chancellor Adenauer, with Grewe, the head of the political department of the German Foreign Ministry, and with von Eckardt, director of

the press office. He discussed with them Israel's apprehensions that the routine execution of the reparations agreement might be halted due to the war.

All three of his interlocutors stressed that the German Federal Republic had no intention of taking steps that might undermine the agreement, and that the Bonn government did not link the agreement with the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Shinnar proposes publication in the Israeli press that he has received confirmation from reliable sources to this effect. He has also made sure that the Palestine Telegraphic Agency would give the report similar publicity.

Notes

1. The reference is to the execution of the reparations agreement between the German Federal Republic and Israel during a war in which Israel was involved.
2. See Shinnar to the prime minister, Tel. 517, 3 November 1956, 130.10/2543/11. Adenauer had said that the problem was provision of war materiel to Israel. Since such materiel was not included among the reparations goods sent to Israel there was no reason for any change.
   In a letter to Ben-Gurion (of 20 November 1956, see file 130.10/2539/5), Adenauer also confirmed that the execution of the reparations agreement between the German Federal Republic and Israel would continue as usual.
3. The memorandum, which was intended for Foreign Minister von Brentano, dealt with the validity of the reparations agreement in wartime (see Shinnar to Rosenne, 6 November 1956, 130.02/2418/2).
4. Yehezkel Dagan, deputy head of the Israel mission in the German Federal Republic.

43. S. Bentsur (Vienna) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 3 November 1956

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.11/2502/16

Summary

In reply to Bentsur's request from the Hungarian Foreign Ministry to grant every Jewish citizen of Hungary the right to emigrate to Israel for family, religious or national reasons, Deputy Foreign Minister Szarka sent the following answer: the Foreign Ministry announces that the Hungarian government recognises the right of Hungarian Jews to emigrate to Israel, and grants its permission.

44. M. Fischer (Ankara) to the West European Division. 3 November 1956

Coded Tel. 527; Inc.: 130.09/2289/13

Summary

The following is a summary of Fischer's conversation with Birgi:[1]

The entry of an Iraqi force into Jordan does not constitute a threat to Israel so long as the current leadership is in power in Iraq. After the lesson the Egyptians were taught, no Arab country is about to attack Israel.

Birgi does not believe that a world war is likely to erupt, but he does not rule out a Russian attempt at limited military intervention through the agency of volunteers.

The ultimate objectives of Turkey and its Muslim allies are the same. Among other things, they include the removal of Nasser and freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal. The differences of opinion are only with regard to form.

Birgi supports the Anglo-French decision to rely on the Canadian proposal to set up an international force,[2] and he will recommend that his government support it.

The Turkish representative to the U.N. was given instructions to abstain in the vote in the General Assembly. But at the representative's request, and following American pressure, he was allowed to support the Assembly resolution.

Personally Birgi believes that Israel's victory will enhance the possibility of a peace settlement in the Middle East.

Notes

1. Muharrem Nuri Birgi, director-general of the Turkish Foreign Ministry.
2. See Editorial Note no. 45.

45. Editorial Note

The Continuation of the Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly, New Proposals to Solve the Crisis (3–4 November 1956)

When the Assembly reconvened on 3 November, three new proposals were introduced for discussion that evening, two of which were brought up by the United States and one by Canada. The common denominator of all the proposals was the attempt to address the roots of the Middle East crisis rather than the current war alone and to offer long-term solutions.

Henry Cabot Lodge presented the two American proposals. The first called for a new approach to the underlying problems in Israeli-Arab relations, in order to create conditions for a stable peace. The Conciliation Commission for Palestine, which had failed in its mission, would be abolished. In its place a five member committee would be established to investigate the problems and make recommendations to the U.N. The second proposal dealt with the Suez Canal: a committee should be set up composed of three Powers, whose job it would be to ensure the operation of the Canal and freedom of navigation through it. The committee would decide on administrative procedures to this end, in consultation with the three countries most involved (Egypt, France and Britain).

These proposals, however, were not accorded much discussion as the other speakers focused on the urgent problems on the agenda — a cease-fire and withdrawal. Ultimately the proposals were not even put to the vote.

The third proposal — to set up an international emergency force under U.N. auspices in order to guarantee the cease-fire and withdrawal of foreign troops from Egypt — was raised by Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Lester Pearson. By establishing an international force to carry out the role that Britain and France were about to take upon themselves (their troop landings in Egypt had not yet begun), Pearson wished to provide a substitute for this operation that would enable the allies to give up their plan without relinquishing their declared objective. In this manner he thought that he would be able to contribute to healing the serious rift that had opened up among the Western powers. The proposal was immediately supported by the United States and Hammarskjöld, who considered it a springboard for the active involvement of the U.N. in solving the crisis. Britain and France, which together with Israel had opposed the formation of an emergency force at the outset, changed their minds within the space of a day. They reasoned that their own troops could serve as the core of this force prior to its establishment, thereby achieving their objective — supervision of the orderly operation of the Suez Canal (see no. 41, note 2; no. 57).

Since the fighting in Sinai continued even after the adoption of the resolution of 2 November on cease-fire and withdrawal (see Editorial Note no. 11), the Assembly passed two additional resolutions on 4 November, when most of the Sinai peninsula was already in Israeli hands. The first called on the secretary-general to present a plan for the establishment of an emergency U.N. force within 48 hours, and the second reiterated the contents of the 2 November resolution. The first resolution was adopted by a majority of 57 in favour, none opposed and 19 abstentions. The second was adopted by a majority of 59 in favour, 5 opposed and 12 abstentions.

Two days later Hammarskjöld submitted the report, as required by the resolution, on the formation of an international force to the Assembly. In an additional resolution adopted on 5 November, the Assembly ordered the establishment of the force's command and appointed E.L.M. Burns, head of the Truce Supervision Organisation in Jerusalem, as its commanding officer. Burns was given the task of beginning

the recruitment of officers and troops for the United Nations Emergency Force (henceforth — UNEF). The resolution was adopted by a majority of 57 in favour, none opposed, and 19 abstentions.

The wording of the Assembly's resolutions is as follows:

GAOR, 1st Emergency Session, Resolutions 998 [ES–1] 4.11.56

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind the urgent necessity of facilitating compliance with its resolution 997 (ES–1) of 2 November 1956,

Requests, as a matter of priority, the Secretary-General to submit to it within forty-eight hours a plan for the setting up, with the consent of the nations concerned, of an emergency international United Nations Force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms of the aforementioned resolution.

GAOR, 1st Emergency Session, Resolution 999 [ES–1] 4.11.1956

The General Assembly,

Noting with regret that not all the parties concerned have yet agreed to comply with the provisions of its resolution 997 (ES–I) of 2 November 1956,

Noting the special priority given in that resolution to an immediate cease-fire and, as part thereof, to the halting of the movement of military forces and arms into the area,

Noting further that the resolution urged the parties to the armistice agreements promptly to withdraw all forces behind the armistice lines, to desist from raids across the armistice lines into neighbouring territory, and to observe scrupulously the provisions of armistice agreements.

Reaffirms its resolution 997 (ES–I), and once again calls upon the parties immediately to comply with the provisions of the said resolutions;

Authorizes the Secretary-General immediately to arrange with the parties concerned for the implementation of the cease-fire and the halting of the movement of military forces and arms into the area, and requests him to report compliance forthwith and, in any case, not later than twelve hours from the time of adoption of the present resolution;

Requests the Secretary-General, with the assistance of the Chief of Staff and the members of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation, to obtain compliance of the withdrawal of all forces behind the armistice lines;

Decides to meet again immediately on receipt of the Secretary-General's report, referred in paragraph 2 of the present resolution.

GAOR, 1st Emergency Session, Resolution 1000 [ES–1] 5.11.56

The General Assembly,

Having requested the Secretary-General, in its resolution 998 (ES–1) of 4 November 1956, to submit to it a plan for an emergency international United Nations Force, for the purposes stated,

[…]

1. *Establishes* a United Nations Command for an emergency international force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms of General Assembly resolution 997 (ES–1) of 2 November 1956;
2. *Appoints*, on an emergency basis, the Chief of Staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation, Major-General E.L.M. Burns as Chief of the Command;
3. *Authorizes* the Chief of the Command immediately to recruit, from the observer corps of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation, a limited number of officers who shall be nationals of countries other than those having permanent membership in the Security Council, and further Authorizes him, in consultation with the Secretary-General, to undertake the recruitment directly from various Member States, other than the permanent members of the Security Council, of the additional number of officers needed;
4. *Invites* the Secretary-General to take such administrative measures as may be necessary for the prompt execution of the actions envisaged in the present resolution.

46. E. Elath (London) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 4 November 1956

Coded Tel. 840; Inc.: 130.09/2321/4

Summary

Elath was summoned urgently to the Foreign Office to hear from Kirkpatrick about Britain's protest over Eban's announcement of Israel's agreement to a cease-fire on the Egyptian front in the General Assembly.[1] This move was liable to undermine the expected British-French landing on the Egyptian coastline. Elath gave Israel's explanations for issuing the announcement at this stage,[2] and Kirkpatrick conveyed the main points to Eden.

Note

1. See no. 36. Prior to Eban's announcement in the Assembly the Israeli foreign minister had approached the British and French ambassadors in Israel in order to inquire whether their governments would oppose an Israeli declaration of agreement to a cease-fire. Eban on his part had directed the same query to the U.N. representatives of these countries. Since the questions were conveyed to the Foreign Ministries of Britain and France, which did not consider the operational repercussions of such a declaration, they responded through the ambassadors in Israel and their U.N. representatives that their governments had no objection (see the Foreign Ministry to Eban and Tsur, YA620, 4 November 1956, 130.09/2377/4).

47. Y. Nahmias (Paris) to S. Peres, 4 November 1956

Coded Tel. 840; Inc.: 130.09/2321/4

Summary

Nahmias reports on the French government's reaction to Israel's announcement of its willingness to agree to a cease-fire on the Egyptian front. France is so incensed by Israel's declaration that it seeks to ascertain whether the report is indeed correct, or whether it was circulated by Israel's enemies. France also wants an answer to a number of questions: why did Israel not support the Franco-British version of agreement to a cease-fire[1] and does Israel know that in principle this step has changed the whole situation?

Bourgès-Maunoury requests an immediate reply to these questions.

Notes

1. See no. 41, note 3.
2. After Ben-Gurion was informed of the angry reactions of Britain and France to Eban's announcement in the Assembly he decided to accede to the French request and to retract the announcement, without officially rescinding it. Eytan therefore gave the following instruction in an urgent cable to Eban: "Don't approve a cease-fire to Hammarskjöld before receipt of further instructions. A serious complication has developed" (Coded Tel. 621, 4 November 1956, 130.02/2401/13).
3. Mollet's trip to London was planned as part of France's urgent efforts to persuade Britain to bring forward the land operation in Egypt (see no. 28 and no. 41, note 2). Following Eban's U.N. announcement of Israel's consent to a cease-fire, Britain, which had previously refused, agreed to bring forward the activation of the parachute troops in Egypt by 24 hours.

48. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to G. Meir. 4 November 1956

Copy: 130.16/2947/12

Notes

1. The message was conveyed to the foreign minister from New York by way of the Truce Supervision Organisation in Jerusalem.
2. The full text of the General Assembly resolution appears in Editorial Note no. 45.
3. See no. 36.
4. On the other hand, Egypt did not set any conditions for its agreement to the Assembly's resolution of 4 November regarding a cease-fire and withdrawal (see Hammarskjöld's message to the foreign minister, 4 November 1956, 130.02/2448/13).

49. A. Eban (New York) to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (New York).[1] 4 November 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/2

Notes

1. Copies of the letter were given to the British and French delegations to the U.N.
   A preliminary cable sent to Eban by the Foreign Ministry containing the main points of the reply to Hammarskjöld said the following: "Exclusively for your personal information — the wording will be open to conflicting interpretations. It will not be clear whether we expect answers to our questions, or whether we are posing conditions. When we receive a second communication from Hammarskjöld, which is unavoidable, we will decide how to clarify our position. In the meantime, we gain crucial extra time. You are requested to refrain absolutely from giving either the secretary-general or the press any interpretations one way or another" (see the Foreign Ministry to Eban, Y761, 4 November 1956, 93.01/2213/12).
2. No. 48.

50. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 4 November 1956

Coded Tel. 832; Inc.: 130.09/2321/4

Summary

Elath was summoned for a talk with Lloyd, who read him a passage from the statement which Eden was about to make in Parliament. It stated that once Israel had eliminated the Fedaiyun bases on captured Egyptian territory, Britain and France would make sure that Israel withdrew from that territory.[2] The two countries announced that their troops would remain in the region in order to keep the peace and as a guarantee to Israel that the conditions that had prevailed there prior to the war would not be repeated. Lloyd explained that the statements were made so that Britain could preserve good relations with Arab countries, and protect the position of Nuri al-Said in Iraq.

Elath responded that Israel was suspicious concerning Great Britain's policies in the Middle East, in view of its past behaviour. He emphasised that Eden's statement did not obligate Israel and that Israel would not withdraw until it had guaranteed its future interests.[3] Elath also asked for information about the situation in Jordan now that Syrian and Iraqi forces had been introduced there.

Notes

1. See no. 26.
2. In exchange for Britain's agreement to bring forward the beginning of the Egyptian campaign by 24 hours, France had assented to the inclusion of the sentence regarding the withdrawal of Israeli troops in Eden's statement in Parliament. The joint British-French declaration to the U.N. secretary-general on 6 November also stated that the two governments still saw a need for intervention by an international force in order to prevent ongoing hostilities between Egypt and Israel and in order to guarantee the early withdrawal of Israeli forces from Sinai.
3. Ben-Gurion reacted sharply to Eden's announcement and to French support for this position in the letter to the U.N. secretary-general, since they violated the contents of the Sèvres agreement. "They have no authority to make announcement," he argued in a cable to Nahmias on 6 November, "and [I] am amazed that our friends in France are party to such a proposal. It will be [an] act of unfriendliness against us if they base their entry into Suez as protection from Israel and no declaration on their part will be binding on us. We urge them in all friendship not to do this thing." (The telegram is quoted in M. Dayan, *Diary of the Sinai Campaign*, pp. 183–184).
4. See no. 46.

51. Israel Embassy in Moscow to the East European Division. 4 November 1956

Coded Tel. 660; Inc.: 130.11/2505/21

Summary

The embassy reports that the continuing unbridled incitement by Soviet radio against Israel, Britain and France is intended not only to provoke a global reaction by public opinion to events in the Middle East, but also to serve as a smokescreen for the reconquest of Hungary by the Soviet army.[1] The Soviet press has laid the groundwork for this step by publishing news items from Poland, Czechoslovakia and other satellites condemning the Hungarian rebels.

The embassy is fearful about the consequences of the incitement, which affects public opinion.[2] The vilification of Israel and the dissemination of the Syrian president's remarks on the subject of Zionism[3] are liable to be interpreted by antisemites as the granting of authorisation to attack the Jews in the Soviet Union, and there are already preliminary manifestations of such a trend. The embassy demands that the world press be apprised of these developments, particularly in countries that are not involved in the conflict in the Middle East.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 8.
2. At the same time, anti-Israeli demonstrations, sometimes several a day, were being held outside the Israeli embassy in Moscow, with police assistance. The number of participants in these demonstrations ranged from a few hundred to a thousand. Smaller protest rallies took place opposite the French and British embassies in Moscow (see Chelouche to the Eastern Europe division, Tel. 673, 6 November 1956, 130.09/2505/21). On the same day (6 November) Chelouche sent the Foreign Ministry a number of cables and letters in which he described the atmosphere at the demonstrations, and their effect on the Israeli embassy. (The telegrams are in file 130.11/2505/22.)
3. See no. 35.

52. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to A. Eban (New York). 5 November 1956

Orig.: 93.03/3064/2

Notes

1. See no. 49.
2. See no. 48.

53. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 5 November 1956

Coded Tel. 768; Outg.: 130.09/2377/4

Summary

The Foreign Ministry informs Eban that it is no longer necessary to be evasive regarding Israel's position on a cease-fire, now that British and French forces have landed in Egypt. There is reason to fear that after Israel's declaration regarding the presentation of the five questions to Egypt,[1] Hammarskjöld may condemn Israel in the General Assembly. On the other hand, Egypt has yet to respond to these questions. Eban should therefore inform Hammarskjöld officially that the government of Israel agrees to approve a cease-fire, as Eban had announced in the Assembly and in light of Egypt's consent. It should nevertheless be mentioned that Israel expects an answer to its questions. This step should be publicised.[2]

Notes

1. See no. 49.
2. Following this directive, Eban wrote to Hammarskjöld the same day that Israel's agreement to a cease-fire is not conditional upon Egypt's response to the foreign minister's questions and that Israel approves the cease-fire (see Eban to the U.N. secretary-general, 5 November 1956, 130.02/2405/1).

54. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 November 1956

Coded Tel. XA842; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban reports that the governments of Britain and France have promised the U.N. General Assembly that Israeli forces would withdraw from Sinai. France's participation in this demand is highly significant. There is reason to fear general Western pressure to return the troops; if not immediately, then at least upon the conclusion of an international arrangement for Suez and Sinai. There are rumours that the United States will withhold all aid from Israel until the latter withdraws. He warns that this will be a very difficult battle and that Israel will find itself isolated, and advises that preparations should be made for it in all seriousness.

Eban's conclusion is that the British and French reliance on the pretext of separating the Egyptian and Israeli forces as the grounds for their offensive is very damaging to Israel.[1]

Note

1. See no. 50, notes 2 and 3.

55. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWT173; Inc.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Hammarskjöld summoned Eban and Kidron in order to hear Israel's position regarding the Canadian plan to set up a U.N. international force.[1] He presented a number of alternatives for establishing and operating the force.

Eban observed that the idea of setting up such a force was revolutionary and had yet to be discussed by the government of Israel. At this stage he had two reservations:

1) Israel has legal reservations about the proposition per se, both as a state and as a member of the U.N.

2) Israel's opinion concerning external intervention is well-known. The effort should be put into bringing the sides together rather than separating them.

Eban asserted that the British and French objective in landing in Egypt was to bring their armies to the region in order to resolve the Suez problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict. He asked whether this was also the objective of the proposed international force.

Later in the discussion the topic turned to the conditions for peace negotiations with Egypt, and Israel's refusal to return to the regime of armistice agreements. It was agreed that Israel would present its remarks on the plan to establish an international force to Hammarskjöld as soon as possible.[4]

Notes

1. See *DCER 1956–1957*, Vol. 22, pp. 208–212.
2. See nos. 50 and 54.
3. See Editorial Note no. 45.
4. In a telegram to the Foreign Ministry Kidron detailed the difficulties involved in stationing an international force: the degree of autonomy it would be accorded; to whom it would be subordinate; its relations with the civilian population; its relations with neighbouring countries and passage through them; with what weapons the force would be equipped; the size of the force and its national composition; its transport and supply systems; its relations with the local armies. It would first be necessary to obtain the agreement of the countries involved in order to station the force (see Tel. X837, 6 November 1956, 130.09/2333/3).

56. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 5 November 1956

Coded Tel. TNW635; Outg.: 130.09/2377/4

Summary

The Foreign Ministry gives Eban guidelines for Israel's response to the proposal to set up a U.N. force.

1) If the Assembly decides that in order to guarantee free navigation in the Suez Canal in accordance with the Constantinople Convention and Security Council resolutions it is necessary to station an international force on both sides of the Canal at a maximum distance of 10 miles, Israel will not object, so long as Egypt has not come up with the required guarantees.
2) The situation in Sinai differs in a substantive way, and there is no reason to introduce an international force there. Israel will not permit an international

force to enter the territory under its control, or to intervene in its relations with other countries in the region. The risk of fighting has been neutralised now that Israel and Egypt have both agreed to a cease-fire, and all the problems at issue between the two countries should be resolved exclusively through direct peace negotiations.

57. M. Comay (Ottawa) to G. Meir. 5 November 1956

Coded Tel. 315; Inc.: 130.02/2405/1

Summary

Comay analyses the implications of the Canadian proposal to create a U.N. emergency force and explains that it is designed both to salvage the political situation and to preserve quiet in the region. It will provide the British and French with a way out, allow the rift among the Western countries to heal and give an opening for final arrangements under the auspices of the U.N. He fears that Britain will turn Israel into a scapegoat if the latter opposes the formation of the force.

Comay states that in his judgment, since Israel is incapable of preventing the establishment of the U.N. force, it should refrain from expressing opposition to it in principle and agree to introduce the force into the Canal region in order to guarantee freedom of navigation. In this manner it will be possible to separate the armies and guarantee a cease-fire, without stationing the U.N. force in Sinai.

58. E. Elath (London) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 5 November 1956

Coded Tel. 850; Inc.: 130.09/2321/4

Summary

Lloyd called in Elath for a conversation in order to hear his views on the prospective British statement regarding an Israeli withdrawal. He claimed that following the Sinai Campaign Britain had lost its standing in Arab eyes, and was now viewed as a collaborator with Israel. The U.K. needs to protect its own interests in the Middle East, particularly with regard to the oil resources of Iraq and the Persian Gulf. It must therefore strengthen the position of Nuri al-Said in Iraq.

Elath replied that he has yet to receive any details concerning the Israeli government's plans with regard to Sinai, but he is certain that Israel will not withdraw from the territory it controls until it reaches a peace settlement with Egypt. So long as Britain insists on remaining in the Canal zone to guard the peace, Israel is entitled to do likewise. While Israel naturally seeks to assist Britain in protecting its interests, it would not agree that this should be at Israel's expense. Lloyd concluded the conversation by saying that since time is pressing and the situation in Iraq is getting trickier, he will soon be compelled to announce the British demand that Israel withdraw from the territories it conquered in Egypt.[5]

Notes

1. See no. 49.
2. See no. 50.
3. Fadil Jamali, chairman of the Iraqi delegation to the U.N.
4. On 7 January 1949 British Spitfire planes flew over Northern Sinai and the Western Negev in order to ascertain whether Israeli troops were withdrawing from Sinai. Israeli combat aircraft shot down five British planes in a series of dogfights, two of them within Israeli territory (see Vol. 2, pp. 349–350 and Companion Volume, Editorial Note, p.173).
5. See the statement issued by the British Foreign Ministry spokesman, as published by Reuters, 5 November 1956, in file 130.02/2401/13.

59. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 5 November 1956

Coded Tel. 632 TNW; Outg.: 130.09/2377/4

Summary

The foreign minister called in British Ambassador Nicholls to express Israel's dismay regarding the statement by the British Foreign Ministry spokesman. According to the Reuters news agency, the spokesman claimed that the British landing in the Canal zone would enable Britain to guarantee the withdrawal of Israeli forces behind the armistice lines.[1]

The foreign minister rejected the argument that the statement was made in order to give satisfaction to Nuri al-Said, saying that it was very offensive to Israel, that it fuelled preexisting suspicions in Israel and that it would not help to promote a solution. She asked why Israel was not allowed to participate in formulating the announcement, and related to Nicholls that the prime minister was enraged.[2]

Harsh accusations had been levelled against Britain in the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of the Knesset, which had forced the foreign minister to come to Britain's defence. Nicholls was asked to report the contents of the conversation to London immediately, and to convey an immediate reply regarding the significance of the spokesman's statement.

Notes

1. See no. 58, note 5.
2. See no. 50, note 3.

60. Editorial Note

The Intervention of the U.S.S.R. in the Middle East Crisis (5 November 1956)

Following the outbreak of hostilities in Sinai on 29 October, the U.S.S.R. did almost nothing to stop the combat aside from introducing a resolution in the Security Council on 30 October. The resolution was vetoed by Britain and France. The Soviet inaction was due to the fact that the Hungarian revolt had erupted simultaneously with the Sinai-Suez crisis (see Editorial Note no. 8). Only after the revolt had been crushed by the Soviet army, which took control of Budapest on 4 November, did the U.S.S.R. find time to address the other crisis in the Middle East. It immediately embarked on a series of vigorous measures, as follows:

1) The dispatch of intimidating notes to Britain, France and Israel (the one addressed to Israel was extremely harsh in tone — see no. 61), which threatened the use of force if these countries failed to comply with General Assembly resolutions. The warning issued to the three countries hinted at the use of missiles, generating anxiety in Western capitals and leading to the application of unprecedented pressure on Israel to resolve the crisis;
2) It was proposed to the United States in a letter to President Eisenhower that the two superpowers cooperate, even to the point of sending a joint naval expedition if necessary, to end the hostilities in the Middle East.

   The Russians convened the Security Council on the night of 5–6 November to discuss the "hostile acts against Egypt," and introduced a resolution calling for the evacuation of troops within 12 hours. If the aggressors failed to withdraw their troops, the United States and U.S.S.R. would be asked to assist Egypt with volunteers, armaments and other military means. The Soviet initiative was voted down by a majority of Council members (see *FRUS 1956*, Vol. XVI, p. 992, and *The Political Battle*, p. 43).

3) The Soviet ambassador to Israel, Abramov, was recalled (see Eytan to the Israel embassy in Moscow, Tel. 434, 6 November 1956, 130.09/2326/6). This was meant as a warning signal to Israel.

61. Note from Premier N. Bulganin (Moscow) to Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion. 5 November 1956

Copy (translated from Russian)[1]: 130.11/2507/4

Summary

In a harshly-worded letter to Ben-Gurion, Bulganin accused Israel that by serving as a tool in the hands of foreign imperialist powers it was indulging in an irrational adventure and provoking all the Middle Eastern peoples who were struggling for liberty and independence. He suggested that Israel was preparing for war while talking about peace.

Bulganin warned the government of Israel that it was playing in an irresponsible and criminal manner with both the fate of the world and its own fate, that it was sowing boundless hatred for itself among peoples of the region and placing its very existence in jeopardy.

He concluded the letter by announcing the recall of the Soviet ambassador to Israel, as a warning to Israel.[2]

Notes

1. The original version of the note is in file 130.11/2507/4.
2. See Editorial Note no. 60.

62. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York), 5 November 1956

Coded Tel. 784; Outg.: 130.09/2332/2

Summary

Eytan transmits to Eban Bulganin's note to the Israeli government. The prime minister has requested that the General Assembly be informed immediately of its contents, especially the explicit threat to the existence of a member nation of the

United Nations.[1] He leaves it up to Eban whether to convey the letter to the president of the Assembly in writing together with his written remarks, or to read it aloud in the Assembly accompanied by oral remarks. He warns him not to get involved in the Cold War. For instance, it is sufficient to deny that Israel is a tool in the hands of the West without countering that Egypt is a tool in the hands of the Soviet Union. The emphasis should be on Israel's wish for peace and direct negotiations, since this is the most effective response.

Note

1. In another cable to the Israel missions abroad sent the same day, Eytan gave instructions that a comprehensive and active protest movement be organised as soon as possible among the Jews and all quarters sympathetic to Israel in the face of the Soviet Union's crude threat to intervene on behalf of an aggressive Egypt against Israel, when the latter was compelled to undertake military action in self-defence (see Coded Circular Tel. 333, 6 November 1956, 130.09/2377/4).

63. D. Sattath (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 5 November 1956

Orig.: 93.39/546/12

Summary

Sattath relates to the embassy the substance of the conversation the foreign minister held with the Soviet ambassador to Israel, Abramov, on 30 October. Abramov inquired about the course of events and about the causes of the war. The foreign minister stressed the limitation of Israel's freedom of navigation, the Fedaiyun raids and the Egyptian claim that it is in a state of war with Israel.

Abramov asked about the British and French positions, and the foreign minister told of the British warning regarding its commitment to Jordan, and of the two messages from Eisenhower to Ben-Gurion. In conclusion, she expressed hope that the Soviet government would show understanding of Israel's situation.

Notes

1. The telegram has not been found.
2. In a conversation with foreign reporters that took place in Moscow on 16 October, 1956, Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Mikoyan was asked if Israel is entitled to freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and replied that all countries are entitled to equal rights. A reporter for the Reuters news agency focused on this point, and from Mikoyan's answer

he received the impression that in Mikoyan's opinion there should be no discrimination among countries (see Vol. 11, no. 495).

3. See no. 15.
4. See nos. 2, 4.

64. Editorial Note

The Failure of Operation Musketeer and the British and French Declaration of a Cease-Fire (6–7 November 1956)

The military offensive through which Britain and France sought to regain control over the Suez Canal was a resounding debacle almost from the outset. The Anglo-French land operation in Egypt was only launched on 6 November, nine days after the beginning of the Sinai Campaign. International pressure, which was continually intensifying during this period, culminated in the threatening Notes sent by Soviet Prime Minister Bulganin to Britain, France and Israel (see no. 61). Britain was also under severe economic and political pressure from the United States and was deeply divided over its attitude to the war. Eden, ailing and defeated, was not up to the challenge. On the very day the operation was launched, therefore, before British and French forces had managed to finish their conquest of the Canal, Eden decided to halt the combat immediately, and informed Mollet of his decision. France chose to go along with Britain, and the two great powers announced their agreement to an immediate ceasefire to the U.N. secretary-general (see Hammarskjöld to Meir, 6 November 1956, U.N. Archives 69, DAG–1/2.1.4.).

After the collapse of Britain and France, Israel was left to fight alone in its political struggle at the U.N., and its isolation and vulnerability quickly became apparent. On 7 November the emergency session of the Assembly was convened again and at the conclusion a further resolution was approved, calling for the immediate withdrawal of Britain, France and Israel from Egypt. This time Britain and France voted with an overwhelming majority (65 countries) in favour of the resolution, and Israel alone voted against it. Ten countries abstained.

The following is the wording of the Assembly resolution:

GAOR, 1st Emergency Session, Resolution 1002 (ES–1) 7.11.1956

The General Assembly:

Recalling its resolutions 997 (ES–1) of 2 November, 998 (ES–1) and 999 (ES–1) of 4 November 1956 and 1000 (ES–1) of 5 November, adopted by overwhelming majorities.

Noting in particular that the General Assembly, by its resolution 1000 (ES–1), established a United Nations Command for an emergency international force to

secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms of its resolution 997(ES–1).

1. *Reaffirms* the above-mentioned resolutions;
2. *Calls once again upon* Israel immediately to withdraw all its forces behind the armistice lines established by the General Armistice Agreement between Egypt and Israel of 24 February 1949;
3. *Calls once again upon* the United Kingdom and France immediately to withdraw all their forces from Egyptian territory, consistently with the above-mentioned resolutions;
4. *Urges* the Secretary-General to communicate the present resolution to the parties concerned, and requests him promptly to report to the General Assembly on the compliance with this resolution.

65. A. Eban (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion. 6 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA174; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban writes in anticipation of his appearance before the U.N. General Assembly the next day. Eban regards the Assembly as an important public arena for explaining Israel's actions and objectives to millions of people. He lists the main points he suggests including in Ben-Gurion's upcoming address in the Knesset. He should:

1) explain that what Israel did was both necessary and justified;
2) point out the historic opportunity for regional and global peace after the neutralisation of the military strength of the Nasser regime which had subverted the peace, disrupted free navigation and provoked armed conflict in Asia and Africa;
3) suggest employing an international force, if at all, only with regard to the Canal,and not in an attempt to resolve the Israeli-Arab conflict;
4) demand direct negotiations rather than an arrangement dictated by outside parties;
5) insist that there is no justification for changing the status quo until guarantees are provided for Israel's security, the free exercise of its navigation rights and a serious process of direct negotiations.

66. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 6 November 1956

Coded Tel. 770; Outg.: 1360.09/2332/2

Summary

The Foreign Ministry directs Eban how to respond to the U.S. proposal to establish the committee of five.[1]

In the debate in the General Assembly it should be stressed repeatedly that it is Israel's clear position that only direct negotiations are likely to produce genuine peace in the region. Israel's own experience and regional and global experience prove that too many intermediaries only serve to drive the sides apart, rather than to bring them together. This idea should be exploited in order to shift the Assembly deliberations out of their usual groove, which is harmful to Israel.

In view of the above arguments, and also for reasons stemming from the 2 November resolution, Israel should vote against the American resolution.

If possible, it is recommended that a group of countries be recruited to sponsor a counter-resolution calling for direct negotiations, even if there is no chance that it will be adopted.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 45.
2. See no. 22 and note 4 there.

67. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 November 1956

Coded Tel. X838; Inc.: 130.09/2333/3

Summary

Eban submits to the Foreign Ministry his suggested wording for the response to the proposal to set up a U.N. emergency force (UNEF):[1]

Israel believes that the problem can be resolved by means of a cease-fire and peace negotiations, rather than police missions and the introduction of foreign forces. This is the source of Israel's reservations about the main idea in the proposed

resolution. Moreover, the proposal creates difficult and complex dilemmas that have already been described by Kidron.[2]

Eban requests authorisation to present this reply in the Assembly.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 45.
2. See no. 55, note 3.

68. G. Avner (London) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 November 1956

Coded Tel. 34; Inc.: 130.09/2321/4

Summary

In a conversation with Avner, Kirkpatrick explained the considerations underlying the British and French decision to agree to a cease-fire. Avner raised the issue of the presence of foreign armies in Jordan. Kirkpatrick replied that the Syrian army is about to leave, and Jordan itself will not attack due to its fear of Israel. This fear is also the cause of Jordan's request that Iraq send troops to its country and station them near the Israeli border.[2] Nuri al-Said has informed Britain that he will not get involved in any anti-Israel adventure, and under no circumstances is he interested in annexing Jordan, which is an economic burden. He also has no desire for a joint border with Israel. All told, Britain is confident that nothing will happen on Israel's eastern border.

Another topic discussed was the numerous rumours regarding Soviet military preparations. The British have no confirmation of this, and do not believe the Russians are going to do anything in the next few days. On the other hand, there are reports of heightened Soviet activity in Syria.

Notes

1. See no. 39, note 2.
2. See Editorial Note no. 1.

69. Editorial Note

The Prime Minister's Address in the Knesset and the Seven Principles Governing Relations with Egypt (7 November 1956)

Two days after the conquest of Sharm el-Sheikh and the conclusion of combat in Sinai, the prime minister gave a dramatic victory speech in the Knesset.

After first describing the chain of events that led to the outbreak of the war and summarising its course, Ben-Gurion appraised its national and military significance for Israel. He traced a continuum between the wars of Israel in the Biblical period of the judges and kings and the Sinai Campaign.

In the second portion of the address Ben-Gurion outlined Israel's regional political objectives. He criticised the U.N. and its conduct during the crisis, including the fact that it had rushed to denounce Israel while it had not said a word against Egypt when the latter openly violated the U.N. Charter and Security Council resolutions. He emphasised in this context that, according to the U.N. Charter, all decisions made by the Assembly are merely recommendations and that every state is entitled to submit alternative recommendations in their stead.

He also attacked the United States, the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain over the fact that for years they had consistently preferred to appease Nasser rather than to uphold international law and defend the honour of the U.N.

In order to clarify Israel's position, Ben-Gurion spelled out the parameters for relations with Egypt and other Arab countries in the following seven principles:

1) The armistice agreement concluded with Egypt is dead and buried, and will never be restored. Any restoration of the armistice agreement would mean a return to murder, blockade and rampages against Israel designed to lead to the country's complete destruction.
2) Along with the abolition of the armistice agreement, the armistice cease-fire lines have also been abolished.
3) There is no quarrel between Israel and the Egyptian people. King Farouk and his successor, Nasser, have brought calamity on their nation by inciting them to war with Israel.
4) Israel is not interested in perpetuating anarchy in its relations with Egypt, and is ready to conduct negotiations on a stable peace, cooperation and neighbourly relations with Egypt, on condition that there are direct negotiations between the two countries, without preconditions or coercion by any party.
5) Israel is ready for negotiations of this type with any of the other Arab countries too. As long as the latter observe the armistice agreements, even if they are not ready for permanent peace, Israel from its standpoint will respect these agreements as well.

6) Under no conditions will Israel agree to station a foreign force of any kind on its territory or in any territory under its control.
7) Israel will not make war on any Arab country unless it has been attacked by them.

The Knesset adopted a resolution supporting the prime minister's announcement, which passed by a majority of 88 votes. All parties except Maki (the Israel Communist Party) voted in favour (see *Divrei Haknesset* (Knesset Reports) Vol. XXI, 1956–1957, pp. 197–201).

Yet even in this moment of triumph Ben-Gurion could not ignore the constraints of reality. At the end of his speech he implicitly alluded to the heavy pressures on him, both from the direction of the United States and from the Soviet Union through Bulganin's menacing Note (see no. 61), saying that Israel refused to bow before the superpowers when they were in the wrong. He nevertheless stressed Israel's natural and proven ties to the global family of nations. This sentence was the first hint of the about-face that would transpire in Ben-Gurion's position within the space of a mere twenty-four hours.

70. Message from President Eisenhower (Washington) to Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion. 7 November 1956

Copy: Ben-Gurion Archives

Notes

1. Due to a hitch in the telecommunications system (cables and coding) between Washington and the U.S. embassy in Israel, the message reached Ben-Gurion only on November 8, after being sent in code through the Israel embassy in Washington.
2. See Editorial Note no. 64.
3. See Editorial Note no. 69.
4. See Editorial Note no. 45.

71. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 7 November 1956

Coded Tel. W945; Outg.: 93.01/2188/1

Notes

1. See no. 70.

2. Hoover, Dulles' deputy, served as acting secretary of state from the beginning of November until the beginning of December, as Dulles was in hospital.
3. See Editorial Note no. 45.

72. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion and G. Meir. 7 November 1956

Coded Tel. XA854; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban warns that the crisis over the withdrawal of troops from Sinai is worsening.

A general international policy supported by all the Great Powers is crystallising in order to bring about the withdrawal of British, French and Israeli troops from Egyptian territory. In addition, there is support for introducing an international force into the region. Britain favours this policy to the point of being willing to impose it by force, and France does not oppose it.

The Soviet Union is threatening to intervene forcibly if the troops are not withdrawn. The United States takes this threat seriously and is adamant about introducing an international force. In its view this is a matter of world peace and preventing a third world war.

The United States will not use force to eject Israel from Egypt, but will exercise all of its influence to station international troops. The possibility that military force, whether British or other, will be applied to guarantee the deployment of the force in Sinai should not be ruled out. If Israel stands firm in its refusal to consent to the entry of the force, it may very probably be compelled to fight in order to keep it out.

It is possible to reach international agreement on preventing the Egyptian army from entering Sinai, thereby guaranteeing freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and preventing a recurrence of the threat to Israel's security, but Israel will be able to remain in Sinai only if it is willing to withstand the unified pressure of the entire world. Given this state of affairs, it should be considered carefully whether it is not worthwhile to adopt a different line, such as willingness to recommend a troop withdrawal but only under explicit and far-reaching conditions and in stages that can be bargained over.

Eban sees a serious danger in overreaching here, as it would jeopardise the enormous benefits that have already been achieved in the military campaign.

Note

1. See no. 21.

73. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 7 November 1956

Tel. XA856; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban reports that the U.N. secretary-general has requested officially that Eban inform him, also officially, whether Israel is willing to withdraw its troops from Sinai, in view of Ben-Gurion's Knesset speech and items 2 and 6 of that speech in particular.[1] Hammarskjöld notes that he is entitled to receive an authorised reply in view of his intention, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution, to introduce an international force into the region within a few days.[2] Israel is the only state he is approaching in this regard, as it controls the territory at issue.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 69.
2. On 7 November the General Assembly approved the final report submitted by the secretary-general on the establishment of the U.N. emergency force. The Assembly accepted the principles of the report and instructed the secretary-general to undertake immediately the necessary measures to implement his recommendations. The Assembly also decided to appoint an advisory committee headed by the secretary-general to be composed of representatives of Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Colombia, India, Norway and Pakistan. The committee's task would be to advise the secretary-general on issues connected with the logistics of the establishment of the force and its operation, complementing Assembly resolutions (GAOR, 1st Emergency Session, Resolution 1001 (ES–1), 7 November 1956).

74. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 7 November 1956

Coded Tel. XA857; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

In a continuation of their previous conversation[1] Hammarskjöld told Eban that the United States believes, as he does, that failure on the part of Israel to withdraw from

Sinai will trigger armed Soviet intervention and a third world war. Eisenhower told Hammarskjöld that he will spare no effort and insist on the evacuation of Sinai and the Canal Zone and the stationing of an international force there. Hammarskjöld asked Eban if he had made the general international context of the problem and the import of Bulganin's threat sufficiently clear to Ben-Gurion. In conclusion, he noted that past disagreements between himself and Israel are now meaningless, and in light of the Soviet-Western situation the current problem is "Will there be an Israel two months from now?" This problem will be determined according to Ben-Gurion's decision regarding Sinai.

Notes

1. See no. 73.
2. *Ibid.*

75. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 7 November 1956

Coded Circular Tel. 332; Outg.: 130.11/2507/14

Summary

The East European division forwards to the missions its preliminary evaluation of Bulganin's Note to Ben-Gurion:[1]

1) The Soviet Union, which was seriously damaged by the Israeli victory in Sinai, does not accept the new status quo as final, and is unwilling to come to terms with the loss of its position in the Middle East. This setback and the affront to Soviet arms will lower the standing of the U.S.S.R. in the Eastern bloc and the world as a whole.
2) The Soviet Union has a vital interest in preventing the general conflagration which is likely to break out in the wake of direct and overt Soviet intervention in the Middle East. But from a political and military point of view, increased arms shipments and transfer of "volunteer" technicians and even pilots to Syria are not inconceivable.
3) The propaganda motive in sending the Note is transparent. The fact that it was published before reaching the prime minister and that the threat is directed exclusively against Israel[2] despite the fact that Israel is one of three combatants, proves that the Soviet Union continues to take the easy route of attacking the weakest party. Its belligerence toward Israel promises easy gains with minimal risk.

4) Despite the gravity of the act of recalling the ambassador, it should be noted that diplomatic relations have not been severed. If Israel can withstand this war of nerves, the time will come when the Soviets make a realistic appraisal of the changes that have transpired in the Middle East, which will include recognition of Israel's weight in the region.
5) In the meantime, it goes without saying that the Soviet aggressive stance is liable to have additional repercussions in the form of deteriorating conditions for Soviet Jewry and the cessation of emigration from the U.S.S.R. and from the Eastern bloc countries to Israel.

Notes

1. No. 61. See also Editorial Note no. 60.
2. On the first day of the war the Soviet company for oil exports unilaterally announced the abrogation of agreements to supply Israel with heating oil and crude oil, due to a refusal by the Soviet Foreign Trade Ministry to issue export licenses for these agreements.

76. N. Goldmann (New York) to the Prime Minister. 7 November 1956

Coded Tel. XA870; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Goldmann gives Ben-Gurion his evaluation of the current mood of American Jewry.

1) Despite initial reservations upon the IDF's entry into Sinai, most American Jews understand that it was a necessary step. They are entirely willing to assist Israel in the political, financial and public relations spheres.
2) There is also complete understanding on the part of American Jewry that under no circumstances should Israel be required to return to the status quo ante, and support for Israel's demands to end the state of war maintained by Egypt, to eliminate the threat to itself and to ensure freedom of navigation for all in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba.
3) As for Israel's refusal to withdraw from Sinai and to transfer the area to an international force: it is not possible to mobilise a united front of American Jews in favour of this position, especially not if an open quarrel erupts between Israel and the United States. Eisenhower has been reelected by a large majority, and his position is unassailable.

If the United Jewish Appeal and Israel Bonds drive are suspended, it will be very difficult to start them up again.

4) Goldmann is convinced that if the United States institutes sanctions against Israel, West Germany will stop the implementation of the reparations agreement.[2]

Notes

1. The telegram has not been found.
2. Ben-Gurion sent the following reply to this telegram: "I never declared that we would or would not leave Sinai, nor did I ever declare that we would refuse to turn over positions in Sinai to an international force. What I did declare was that the former armistice lines would never be reinstated and that no foreign force would be posted in our country or in territories under our control. I did not specify which territories are under our control, and this is an important distinction" (see Ben-Gurion to N. Goldmann, Tel. 812, 8 November 1956, 130.09/2332/2).

77. Editorial Note

The Government Decision to Withdraw (8 November 1956)

Bulganin's blunt Note was the first stage in an intense campaign of warnings and pressures employed against Ben-Gurion to induce Israel to evacuate the territory it had captured in the war.

Immediately upon receipt of the Note, Ben-Gurion decided to send Golda Meir and Shimon Peres to France in order to ascertain how France would react if the Soviets were to carry out their threats. The two left for Paris after midnight on 6 November. During the few hours they spent there they met with Foreign Minister Pineau and Defence Minister Bourgès-Maunoury. The sessions were conducted in a grim atmosphere as the French had heard the rumours about massive arms shipments to the Middle East from the U.S.S.R. and the dispatch of "volunteers" to Syria. The French were sympathetic to Israel, but could not promise any concrete assistance.

On the day Ben-Gurion delivered his Knesset address (see Editorial Note no. 69), the U.N. Assembly adopted resolutions calling for Israel's unconditional withdrawal and the establishment of an international emergency force by large majorities. At the same time the United States feared possible Russian exploitation of the Middle East crisis to gain a foothold in the region and to win the sympathy of third world countries by tarring the United States with the brush of support for the aggressors. The Americans were mainly afraid of brinksmanship that risked igniting a global conflagration (see no. 78).

These concerns were augmented by the world-wide disinformation campaign being waged by the Soviets. Reports streamed in from various sources (including the American ambassador in Moscow) of Soviet battleships ready to pass through the Dardanelles in the direction of the Mediterranean, jet planes flying over Turkey en route to Syria, the arrival of submarines and frogmen in the port of Alexandria and even of a massive Soviet air attack on Israel slated to begin within 24 hours.

The more the campaign of intimidation intensified, the more the United States stepped up the pressure on Israel. The message Eisenhower sent Ben-Gurion on 7 November (see no. 70) was accompanied by explicit threats from acting Secretary of State Hoover to the effect that an Israeli refusal to withdraw would trigger severe penalties against Israel, beginning with the halting of all private and governmental American aid and ending with the imposition of sanctions by the General Assembly against Israel and even its expulsion from the U.N. (see no. 71).

Ben-Gurion's first reaction was to ask Eban whether in the current Washington climate a meeting between himself and the president could be arranged in order to present Israel's position. Eban raised the request in a discussion at the State Department (see *FRUS, 1956,* Vol. XVI, pp. 1087–1089), only to conclude that the hostile atmosphere towards Israel currently prevailing in Washington ruled out any such possibility (see the stenographic record of the government meeting, 8 November 1956, in file 77.0/9/32).

Against the backdrop of the threats from the State Department, the hostile atmosphere in the U.N., the Soviet threats and accusations that Israel was fomenting tension that could deteriorate into a world war, Ben-Gurion altered his position. On 8 November two emergency meetings of the government were convened. The morning session approved the wording of a letter to be sent in response to Bulganin and the afternoon session passed a decision on withdrawal, which was included in the reply to Eisenhower (see the stenographic record of the government meeting, *ibid.*). This was done in order to link the United States to any future arrangement in the Middle East. An identical version of the decision was transmitted simultaneously to the U.N. secretary-general. Following the government meeting Ben-Gurion met with opposition leaders and informed them of the decision.

After midnight Ben-Gurion announced in a broadcast to the nation that Israel had consented to the demand for withdrawal, while making it conditional on the entry of a U.N. force into the Suez Canal region. (Ben-Gurion had consulted with Eban whether to announce an unconditional or conditional withdrawal, and the latter recommended making consent conditional. See *The Political Battle*, p. 54.) In Ben-Gurion's judgment this version of the announcement afforded Israel the possibility of delaying the withdrawal, both in order to give the world time to calm down from its war hysteria and to enable Israel to prepare for the political and public relations battle ahead (see his remarks at the meeting of the senior military command, 29 November 1956, *The Sinai Campaign*, pp. 233–241 [Hebrew]).

78. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 8 November 1956

Coded Tel. X871; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban explains to Ben-Gurion that the world is tensely awaiting his reply to Eisenhower's message and that there is a general feeling that the fate of world peace is in his hands. He proposes the following guidelines for Israel's response:

1) Israel has achieved the objectives it declared at the outset of the war – the destruction of the Fedaiyun gangs and the attainment of security. It has also defeated the Egyptian army, thereby removing the main threat to Israel.
2) Israel will announce that it has no territorial aspirations in Sinai. It will withdraw its troops from there once appropriate arrangements are made with the U.N. emergency force (UNEF), and will cooperate with this force.
3) Israel insists on realising the following objectives within the framework of the planned international operation:

A) Egypt will be denied the opportunity to interfere with navigation in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba. B) The arrangements that are made in Sinai should prevent the organisation of Fedaiyun activities or any other hostile activities. C) Binding guarantees must be received from Egypt of the termination of hostile activities and the cessation of the state of war. D) Direct negotiations with Egypt should begin immediately on a new arrangement to take the place of the armistice agreements.

Israel must answer Eisenhower immediately, as international tension is growing along with fears of Soviet military intervention.

Eban also suggests that in his response Ben-Gurion mention the concentration of Soviet weaponry in Syria and ask Eisenhower to bring all of his influence to bear to eliminate this danger to Israel's security.

Notes

1. Regarding Israel's opposition to the stationing of a foreign force within its borders or in territories it has conquered, see Editorial Note no. 69.
2. See no. 74.

79. Message from Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to President Eisenhower (Washington). 8 November 1956

Copy: Ben-Gurion Archives

Note

1. See no. 70.

80. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to D. Hammarskjöld (New York). 8 November 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/2

Notes

1. See no. 52.
2. See Hammarskjöld to Meir, 7 November 1956, 130.16/2947/12.

81. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 8 November 1956

Coded Tel. XA872; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban informs Ben-Gurion that Israel will not get any British or French backing for remaining in Sinai, except perhaps during the period preceding the arrival of UNEF. The French and British endorse the deployment of this force and the withdrawal of their own troops as soon as it arrives. The British state explicitly that the Israeli troops must return to their previous lines. The French are silent on this point, but express no opposition. In the wake of the Soviet threat that has triggered American panic and of Eisenhower's pressure on Eden and Mollet, the British and French have capitulated. All that they will have attained, apart from the destruction of Nasser's military capacity, will be to transfer the area they conquered to UNEF rather than Nasser.[1]

Note

1. In another cable sent the same day Eban reported on a conversation he held with Alphand, the French ambassador to the United States, in which a different interpretation was given to the French and British position: they will attempt to give the impression that the conquered regions have been internationalised, which will bolster the Western and Israeli position in negotiations on the Suez problem and on relations between Egypt and Israel (see Eban to the United States division, WIA953, 8 November 1956, 93.01/2188/1).

82. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 8 November 1956

Coded Tel. 876; Inc.: 130.09/2321/4

Summary

In a conversation with Elath, Lloyd explained that following the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 7 November, Britain will have to withdraw from the Suez Canal when UNEF is set up. Elath replied that Israel's situation is different, and it will only be willing to discuss the disposition of the territories it has conquered at a peace conference.

Lloyd warned of the possibility that the Assembly would apply economic sanctions against Israel if the latter violates the resolution. He explained that Britain will continue to insist publicly on an Israeli withdrawal, but will not support the demand to compel Israel to pull out. Elath believes that this change in the British position stems from the latter's imminent withdrawal of its own troops from the Canal, and its preference that Israel continue to stay in proximity to the Canal.

Later in the conversation Lloyd emphasized Great Britain's "strong desire" to strengthen its friendship with Israel, particularly in light of the dangers posed to the region by Russian penetration. He claimed that the Soviets present no immediate danger in Iraq and Jordan, but that in Syria the situation is grave.

The British Foreign Office would be glad to forward to Israel any information it has on the situation in Arab countries. The British government is willing to assist as much as it can in other areas too. Lloyd also noted that he had approved a delivery of petrol to Israel as a "commercial" transaction.

Notes

1. Reginald Michael Hadow, deputy head of the Levant Department in the British Foreign Office.

2. As reflected by Israel's vote on the Assembly resolution regarding a withdrawal (7 November 1956).
3. The word is unclear in the original.
4. After the Soviet Union stopped supplying Israel with crude oil and heating oil, the latter embarked on a vigorous world-wide quest to find alternative sources of fuel (see, for instance, Sherman to Kosloff, X889, 9 November 1956, 130.09/2333/3, Bartur and Galli to Kosloff, Tel. 973, 10 November 1956, 130.09/2347/2).

83. Note from Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to Premier N. Bulganin (Moscow). 8 November 1956

Copy: 130.09/2326/6

Summary

In his response to Bulganin's Note,[1] Ben-Gurion rejects the charges it contains as based on incorrect and incomplete information and lists the causes of the war:

1) Egypt had established a special force, the Fedaiyun, in order to commit terror attacks against Israel;
2) Egypt aspires to annihilate Israel and considers itself to be in a state of war with it;
3) Nasser had imposed an economic boycott on Israel, in contravention of the U.N. charter, together with a naval blockade against Israeli ships in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba. He is violating an explicit resolution of the Security Council regarding freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal.[2]

Israel's Sinai campaign derived from the imperative of self-defence. Israel had ceased its fire in response to a call from the U.N. General Assembly, and is willing to enter into direct negotiations with Egypt to attain a stable peace and cooperation between the two countries.

In conclusion, Ben-Gurion expresses his astonishment and dismay over the threat to Israel's existence and well-being contained in Bulganin's Note. Israel, as a sovereign state, determines its own path, and its foreign policy will not be dictated by any outside party.

Notes

1. See no. 61.
2. See no. 22, note 3.
3. Eytan presented Ben-Gurion's reply to Bulganin's Note to the official in charge of the Soviet embassy in Israel on 8 November and told him orally that the Israeli government was meeting to discuss the U.N. resolution calling for an Israeli withdrawal. Although the meeting had not yet concluded, Eytan stated that ultimately a decision would be

made to withdraw. In addition, Eytan instructed Chelouche, who was in charge of the Israel embassy in Moscow, to transmit the information immediately to the Soviet Foreign Ministry (see Eytan to the Israel embassy in Moscow, Tel. 440, 8 November 1956, 130.11/2507/4).

84. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and S. Peres. 8 November 1956

Coded Tel. 958; Inc.: 130.09/2343/6

Summary

Tsur forwards France's urgent demand to receive any concrete data in Israel's possession proving that the Egyptian weaponry that was captured exceeds the Egyptian army's capacity to absorb it. Ditto with regard to Syria (including exact numbers and descriptions), along with any direct or indirect proof of a Soviet-Egyptian plan to attack or take over Israel.

Joxe contends that this data could change Israel's situation vis-à-vis the United States.

Tsur awaits an immediate response to this demand.[1]

Note

1. The cabled answer has been lost, but two weeks later Bendor wrote the following to Eytan: "There is a crisis of confidence that can only get worse if we fail to come up with tangible proof regarding our claims of an Egyptian-Russian conspiracy in the Middle East. About two weeks ago we launched a massive public relations campaign concerning proof we have both in terms of quantities of weapons and equipment that fell into our hands and in terms of documents. After sending a few telegrams we received from the military attaché a report by the IDF quartermaster general regarding the equipment that was taken, and it is very far from confirming the reports that were published in Israel and abroad in our name. The quartermaster general's list includes no equipment. We received no documents regarding a Russian-Egyptian conspiracy, either from the [Foreign] Ministry or from anywhere else" (see Tel. 69, 22 November 1956, 130.02/2459/4).

85. G. Rafael (New York) to W. Eytan. 9 November 1956

Original: 130.02/2401/3

Summary

Rafael criticises the political assumptions underlying Israel's decision to launch the Sinai Campaign: i.e., that the Soviet Union, busy with its own troubles in the satellite states, would not intervene in the Middle East, even when all its achievements there were about to collapse; that Britain would cooperate with Israel on the battlefield and that the United States would abandon its declared policy of refusing to tolerate the conquest of territories of a sovereign country. He protests against the complete exclusion of the Foreign Ministry during the planning of the campaign. In Rafael's opinion, the factors that helped to undermine Israel's position were recognition of the real danger of Soviet military intervention, the British and French desertion in the middle of the campaign, leaving Israel alone on the battlefield and the prime minister's Knesset declaration that the armistice agreements no longer existed.

Upon the completion of the military struggle, a gruelling political struggle is now beginning, and in order for Israel to hold its own it is necessary to restore the Foreign Ministry to its rightful place in the country's governing structure. It is the Foreign Ministry which can provide the leadership with information concerning the true balance of forces and Israel's place in the global power struggle.

Note

1. See no. 6, note 3.

86. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 9 November 1956

Coded Tel. 834; Outg.: 130.09/2332/2

Summary

Eytan instructs Eban to give wide publicity to the Soviet Union's aggressive intentions towards Israel.[1]

He should direct the attention of the U.N. Assembly to reports regarding the concentration of troops in Syria; raise the issue in the Jewish and non-Jewish press

and among workers' organisations[2]; speak to Hammarskjöld and share Israel's concerns with him.[3]

Notes

1. Eban did act to disseminate the information about Soviet threats and aggressive intentions towards Israel in the Assembly (see Eban to Herzog, WIA 955, 9 November 1956, 93.01/2213/5). In this telegram Eban also relates that he asked Rountree to consider whether it would be worthwhile for Eisenhower to warn the Soviet Union against introducing arms and heightening tensions in the Middle East and against participating in aggression against Israel. Rountree urgently requested that Israel show him any reliable information in their possession, and promised to forward the suggestion to the president immediately.
2. Meir also recommended that Eban consider publishing news items in the U.S. press (while concealing the source of the information) about large squadrons of aircraft on their way to Syria, the constant influx of Soviet arms into that country and the rumours from various sources about Soviet preparations for aerial bombardment of towns and military bases in Israel (see Meir to Eban, TNW647, 8 November 1956, 130.09/2339/7).
3. Kidron answered this telegram, informing Eytan that he had already spoken with the U.N. secretary-general on the subject on 9 November. Hammarskjöld replied that he had approached Kuznetsov, the Soviet first deputy minister of foreign affairs, and demanded that the latter exert his influence to prevent the spread of hostilities in the Middle East. The secretary-general added that the reason for the haste in establishing the international force and transferring it to the Middle East was his wish to confront the Russians with a fait accompli. Kidron and Eban also spoke with Lodge, as they believed that if he were to warn the Soviets it would carry great weight (see Kidron to Eytan, Tel. 896, 10 November 1956, 130.02/2404/6).

87. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 9 November 1956

Coded Tel. WIA959; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban fears that Israel will be pressured to give up the Gaza Strip. There is no doubt that at the very least the Soviet Union and the Asian countries will agitate in this direction. The West has not yet formulated a unified position on the question. With regard to the United States, the decisive issue is likely to be that of the refugees. If Israel declares that the liberation of Gaza will enable Israel to make a greater contribution to resolving the problem of the refugees than was formerly possible, this may help to reconcile the West to Israel's role in Gaza.

88. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 9 November 1956

Coded Tel. 970; Inc.: 130.09/2347/2

Summary

In a conversation with Tsur, Pineau supported Israel's decision to withdraw, but suggested it should not be in too much of a hurry, and should make the withdrawal conditional on the stationing of UNEF in Sinai. Hammarskjöld had explained to him the character and objectives of the force: it is not intended to be a military force, as its role is merely to separate the two sides; the force will not be able to enter the territory of any country without its consent; it will not affect the political balance among countries in the region nor will it interfere in the military balance. Pineau considered this to be risky, due to his apprehensions concerning Soviet military aid to Egypt or Syria. He also opposed the secretary-general's proposal that the commander of the force be directly responsible to him.

Later in the conversation the risk of Soviet military intervention in the Middle East was discussed, together with the dangers this poses to Israel. France is trying to restore its partnership with the United States, despite Eisenhower's discouraging position.

At the end Tsur asked Pineau to take immediate action to resolve Israel's petrol shortage,[3] and Pineau promised to take it up with his colleagues in the government without delay.

Notes

1. In this telegram Meir drew Tsur's attention to the fact that France, like Israel, had made its withdrawal conditional on coordination with UNEF. She instructed him to speak with Pineau in order to try to attain cooperation with France on the subject (see Meir to Tsur, Tel. 819, 9 November 1956, 130.09/2347/3).
2. In this telegram Tsur reported on his meeting with Joxe and Daridan on 7 November, in which he suggested ways to disseminate the information concerning Soviet plans to penetrate and dominate the Middle East. In addition, he contended that supreme efforts should be made to restore cooperation with the United States to previous levels (see Tsur to the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, Tel. 956, 8 November 1956, 130.09/2343/6).
3. See no. 82, note 3.

89. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 10 November 1956

Coded Circular Tel. 352; Outg.: 130.09/2377/4

Summary

Ben-Gurion transmits to Israel's ambassadors, diplomatic representatives and military attachés abroad the following guidelines for explaining Israeli policy:

1) The Egyptian army must not be allowed to return to the Sinai desert. The Suez Canal will thus be internationalised, de facto if not de jure.
2) The international force needs to remain in the Canal Zone only, in order to guarantee freedom of navigation to all countries, without depending on Egypt.
3) Egypt must be required to discuss the establishment of a stable peace with Israel, as the armistice agreement has been irrevocably damaged, and was only intended in the first place to serve as a bridge until the achievement of a stable peace.
4) The Straits of Tiran and the western shore of the Gulf of Aqaba are vital to Israel, for only Israeli control of these areas will guarantee freedom of Israeli and international navigation there.
5) The risk of Soviet domination of the entire Middle East with the assistance of Nasser and Quwatli must be reduced. If such domination is not prevented by deposing these two from power, all of Africa will fall into Soviet hands in the near future.
6) The true character of the Nasser regime must be revealed: a fascist military dictatorship that effectively serves as a tool for the Soviets in the penetration of Africa and the Middle East.
7) The position of the Arab and Islamic peoples, excluding Turkey, in the General Assembly regarding the brutal crushing of Hungary by the Soviet army proves the close cooperation between these two forces, and this partnership poses a danger to the entire free world.
8) There are many forces and individuals operating in the Arab world in opposition to the regimes and aspirations of Nasser and Quwatli, but they require active assistance from the free world in order to rid themselves of these two evil leaders.

90. M. Kidron (New York) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 10 November 1956

Coded Tel. X900; Inc.: 130.02/2401/18

Summary

Kidron sums up the political situation at the U.N. following Israel's decision to evacuate Sinai.

Following a period of intense worry and anxiety over possible Soviet intervention, Israel's decision was received with great relief. Yet the concern for peace in the Middle East continues, and the general opinion is that Soviet influence in the region has grown considerably.

Arab arrogance continues to intensify in view of Russian patronage, the sympathy of the Assembly, the French and British debacle and the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai.

The prevailing opinion in the U.N. is that Britain and France have been resoundingly defeated. Western Europeans consider this failure to have severely damaged the future of the continent. The general atmosphere is one of disquiet concerning the next few weeks.

Note

1. On the defeat of the Soviet initiative in the Security Council to organise joint military intervention with the United States in Egypt, see Editorial Note no. 60.

91. Meeting: D. Ben-Gurion — E. Lawson (Jerusalem, 10 November 1956)

Résumé: 130.02/2405/1

Summary

Ambassador Lawson presented the prime minister with the following letter from President Eisenhower:[1]

"I appreciate your message of yesterday informing me that you will withdraw your forces from Egypt. This decision will be widely welcomed not only by the United States but by all the nations striving to restore peace and security for all

nations in the Middle East. It will contribute greatly to a situation in which a peaceful solution may be attained."

Ben-Gurion asked to forward a number of comments to the president via the ambassador.[2] In the U.N. Assembly deliberations on the suppression of the Hungarian rebellion, the Arabs did not support the demand to withdraw the Soviet army from there. The lesson the Arabs will glean from the position of the Soviet Union and that of the United States will be that the Russians know how to act, while the Americans only talk.

The influx of huge quantities of Soviet arms into Egypt and Syria constitutes a danger to the Middle East and the entire free world, and the threat of Soviet domination of the Middle East and Africa has increased. In such a state of affairs Israel is faced with the threat of annihilation. The prime minister feels obliged to express his regret that at the critical moment the United States saved Nasser from certain downfall and continues to assist him.

Ben-Gurion promises to keep his commitment to the president, but he asks himself whether peace and justice in the region mandate the return of Egyptian troops to Sinai, an area which was not an integral part of Egypt but was annexed to it by Britain.

Ben-Gurion states that he was offended by Hoover's superfluous threats.[3] The United States never threatened Egypt with economic sanctions and expulsion from the U.N. when the latter refused to comply with Security Council resolutions regarding freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal. Now that the Soviet Union is supporting Nasser and the United States is threatening Israel, no one will dare demand that Nasser fulfil his obligations in accordance with the U.N. Charter. There are liberal elements in both Egypt and Syria that oppose Nasser, but the United States does not encourage or assist them. The prime minister warns the United States of the dangers to the Middle East in particular and to the free world in general as a result of its policy.

Notes

1. The letter was sent on 9 November.
2. No. 79.
3. See no. 71.
4. In his report to the State Department on the meeting, Lawson emphasised Ben-Gurion's angry mood. See *FRUS 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 567, p. 1107.

92. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to A. Eban. 10 November 1956

Coded Tel. TNWA651; Inc.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

The foreign minister urges Eban to activate the individuals who pressured Israel on Eisenhower's behalf (Silver,[2] Adams and others). The president should be persuaded to caution the Soviet Union publicly against acting in the Middle East. If his meeting with Mollet and Eden is to take place in the near future, perhaps that is the best time to do so. It should be spelled out to the Americans that the Soviet Union's entrenchment in Syria jeopardises not only Israel; it will also lead to the destruction of the Baghdad Pact and to the delivery of the entire region to Soviet rule.[3]

Notes

1. See no. 86, note 2.
2. See no. 14.
3. See no. 91

93. A. Eban (New York) to G. Meir. 10 November 1956

Coded Tel. 179; Inc.: 130.09/2338/23

Summary

In light of the disturbing reports from the Jordanian border and Syria,[1] Eban is afraid that Israel will be compelled to take action against these countries. He suggests creating convenient conditions for action in advance, in order to avoid triggering dangerous political consequences.

Israel should give the maximum amount of public warning,[2] notify the representatives of the Great Powers of what is going on, hold daily meetings with the U.N. secretary-general in order to keep him abreast of the facts and send the Security Council a letter every time there is an incident.

Since the United States was offended by being left in the dark regarding the military decisions on the eve of the war, Israel must tell them in advance that if the incursions from Syria do not stop it will be compelled to take security measures. A similar approach should be adopted with respect to Britain if the source of the problem is in Jordan.

If Israel is about to take action, the Security Council should be notified of this fact in accordance with article 51 of the U.N. Charter.

Notes

1. On 8 November Fedaiyun gangs renewed their operations along the borders with Jordan and Syria. The attacks continued over the following days.
2. In his 10 November address at the last meeting of the emergency session, before the subject of the Middle East was transferred to the General Assembly, Eban spoke of the increased tension on the Jordanian and Syrian borders, and expressed concern over the reports of Soviet arms concentrations in Syria (see *The Political Battle,* p. 63).

94. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to G. Meir. 11 November 1956

Orig.: 93.03/3064/2

Note

1. See no. 80.

95. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Meir. 11 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA181; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban warns that any announcement of an Israeli intention to evade the prime minister's commitment[1] will produce severe repercussions:

1) It will invite heightened international pressure to ensure that the commitment is honoured.
2) The Soviets will send volunteers to the Middle East, as stated in their latest announcement.[2]
3) It will frustrate efforts to renew relations with the United States, which have been effectively almost cut off.
4) It will engender disappointment in friendly public opinion, which would like to trust the statements and commitments of the government of Israel.

Eban reiterates that it is extremely important that the government of Israel declare that it stands by its announcement to the secretary-general and that its commitments will be carried out both in letter and in spirit.

Notes

1. An article in the *New York Times* quoted Israeli spokesmen and senior officials to the effect that Israel did not intend to implement the prime minister's announcement by withdrawing from Sinai and the Gaza Strip. The reporter, Homer Bigart, contended that without renewed pressure from the great powers, particularly the United States, Israel would abrogate its commitment to the U.N. secretary-general (see Eban to the United States division, Tel. 180, 11 November 1956, 130.09/2338/23).
2. On 11 November T.A.S.S., the Soviet telegraphic agency, published the following announcement:
"A sign of the solidarity of the Soviet people with Egypt is the fact that a large number of Soviet citizens, including pilots, tank crews and artillerymen along with officers, have asked permission to travel to Egypt as volunteers in the war to expel the aggressors from Egyptian soil.
Leadership circles in the Soviet Union state that if Britain, France and Israel do not leave Egypt on various pretexts, the relevant authorities of the Soviet Union will not prevent Soviet volunteers from joining the struggle of the Egyptian people for its independence" (see Sattath to Eshel, 11 November 1956, 130.11/2505/21).

96. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 12 November 1956

Coded Tel. WIA967; Outg.: 93.01/2219/13

Summary

Eban recounts a conversation he held with Allen Dulles, in which he pointed out the weak points in U.S. policy toward Israel following the war:
1) If the United States were subject to a similar threat, it would respond in the same way;
2) The United States saved Nasser from collapse after the war, thereby helping to bolster Soviet influence in Asia and Africa. From Israel's standpoint this constitutes a threat of annihilation;
3) The United States is excessively preoccupied with strengthening the influence of the U.N.

In Eban's opinion the situation can still be corrected and he made a number of suggestions to that end:
1) The United States should break off its incongruous alliance with the Soviet Union and Nasser, and return to its real allies;

2) The United States must guarantee that Egyptian troops will not return to Sinai, and that the U.N. force will not leave the Canal until freedom of navigation there is assured;
3) Israel has opened a new naval route in the Gulf of Aqaba to free navigation, and it is up to the United States to help protect this route;
4) The United States must decide to eliminate Nasser and Quwatli;
5) The United States must bring its full influence to bear in order to initiate peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt.

Allen Dulles expressed support for Eban's assessments and proposals, saying that if he had known of Israel's plans in advance, he would have encouraged the president to back them. As for the Soviet threat, he opined that the Soviets would refrain from action in light of the clear warning contained in Eisenhower's reply to Bulganin's proposal,[2] and that the United States will not abandon the Middle East.[3]

Notes

1. See no. 91.
2. See also Allen Dulles' memorandum of 10 November 1956 to the acting secretary of state (Hoover), in which he warned of the risk of Soviet penetration of the Middle East due to the growing Soviet influence in Egypt and Syria, *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 553, pp. 1101–1102.
3. See White House press release, *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 512, pp. 1007–1008.

97. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the Prime Minister. 12 November 1956

Coded Tel. WIA976; Outg.: 93.01/2219/13

Summary

Shiloah reports on his conversation with Bedell Smith, who voiced bitter dissatisfaction with British conduct during the war. In his opinion, the foot-dragging of the British in landing their forces in Egypt was responsible for the military debacle. Shiloah inferred from Bedell Smith's remarks that he justified the Israeli operation, but was disappointed that it was not successful. He accepts the prime minister's assessment of the current situation in its entirety, and will try to persuade others of it as well to the extent of his ability. He also supported a meeting between the prime minister and the president but warned that he was dubious about whether he would be able to overcome the Administration's current leanings.

Bedell Smith expressed sorrow over Dulles' illness, as he views Dulles as someone who, despite his mistakes, weighs things in global terms and understands the Soviet risk better than others.

Note

1. General Walter Bedell Smith was a personal friend of Eisenhower and head of his staff in World War II. He had been offered an appointment as special advisor to the president on foreign affairs. Bedell Smith ultimately rejected the offer.

98. M. Sherman (New York) to I. Kosloff.[1] 12 November 1956

Coded Tel. 634; Inc.: 130.09/2333/3

Summary

In light of the possibility that for physical or political reasons the Suez Canal may remain closed for a period of time, Sherman suggests proposing to Britain and France the immediate construction of a pipeline between Eilat and the Mediterranean in order to save time. The pipeline could be operated on an emergency basis on short notice in order to supply Israel's oil needs, with the balance being transferred to Britain and France.[2]

Notes

1. Israel Kosloff, the petroleum commissioner in the Ministry of Development and fuel adviser in the Ministry of Finance.
2. Since the nationalisation of the Suez Canal initiatives had been proposed, plans drawn up and contacts and consultations held at various levels in Israel, Europe and the U.S. on the subject of an oil pipeline. With the closure of the Canal as a result of the fighting and the opening up of the Gulf of Aqaba these plans became more realistic. A large number of documents on this subject are stored in the files of the Israel State Archives; the most important and representative ones are included in this volume. See, for instance, nos. 126, 140 and 284.

99. B. Eliav (Jerusalem) to M. Rivlin (New York). 12 November 1956

Coded Tel. 249; Outg.: 130.09/2332/2

Summary

Eliav reports that in order to camouflage the antisemitic character of the incitement against Israel, the Soviets had forced 34 prominent Jews to publish an anti-Israeli manifesto in *Pravda* on 6 November. On the same day they also sent Jews to demonstrate in front of the Israel embassy in Moscow[1] with posters emblazoned with Yiddish slogans. This was the first time that Yiddish writing had been displayed publicly in Moscow. Eliav demands that the incident be publicised in the general press and that the Soviets' motives be exposed, while emphasising that most of these Jews are acting under coercion.

It should also be stressed that the manifesto was based on false premises, which are completely at odds with facts that are common knowledge in the free world. This was made possible only by the conditions of total confinement which prevent Soviet citizens from being exposed to any news that displeases the government.

Notes

1. See no. 51, note 2.
2. On 13 January, 1953 it was announced in Moscow that nine Jewish doctors were being tried for conspiring to murder Soviet leaders by poisoning. A month later a bomb exploded next to the Soviet embassy in Tel Aviv and the U.S.S.R. broke off relations with Israel.
   The doctors' trial was halted and the indictments dropped after Stalin's death in March 1953.
3. *Nativ*, a secret Israeli organisation (also called "the Liason Bureau") founded in 1953 for the purpose of making contact with Soviet and Eastern European Jews and encouraging them to immigrate to Israel.

100. Z. Argaman (Washington) to the East European Division. 12 November 1956

Coded Tel. WIA973; Outg.: 93.01/2188/1

Summary

Argaman states that following reports of the renewal of antisemitic policies in the Soviet Union, the embassy intends to mobilise Jewish and non-Jewish public opinion in the United States to denounce the U.S.S.R. In view of Soviet anti-Israel policies and the current mood in the United States on the subject of the Hungarian revolt there is no longer any reason or even any possibility to continue keeping the Jewish question separate from general criticism of the Soviet regime and its policies, and it is vital to integrate the two.

101. G. Meir (Jerusalem) to S. Divon, Y. Palmon and E. Danin. 12 November 1956

Copy: 130.15/3738/24

Summary

Golda Meir announces that she has instructed the advisors for Arab affairs, Shmuel Divon and Ezra Danin, to encourage public opinion in the Gaza Strip to express opposition to returning Gaza to Egypt and to favour remaining under Israeli rule.

The ultimate objective of this operation is to induce as many residents of the Strip as possible to accept compensation for settling their claims and recognising that they have left Israeli territory for good.[1]

Note

1. In contrast with the foreign minister's opinion, Ben-Gurion held that it would be premature to address the issue of the compensation to which residents of the Gaza Strip are entitled. See the Middle East division to the Israel legation in Geneva, Tel. 139, 6 November 1956, 130.09/2302/7.

102. A. Eban (New York) to the United States Division. 13 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA184; Outg.: 93.01/2219/13

Summary

Eban reports on his endeavours to change the attitude toward Israel in the Administration and public opinion in the United States. He had met with Javits,[1] who was about to come to Israel bearing a letter for Ben-Gurion from Eisenhower. He had also met with members of the Hearst newspaper syndicate and with the heads of the Conference of Presidents, in order to spur them into action.

His general impression is that it is feasible to bring about a shift in the U.S. position, but that this is not a matter of days but rather of a number of weeks.

He intends to organise the work of the delegation over the next few weeks so that it is free to conduct a comprehensive public relations campaign among officials, Congressmen and the press.

Notes

1. Jacob Javits, the attorney general of New York State, arrived in Israel in the last week of November bearing a personal letter from President Eisenhower to Ben-Gurion. In talks with Ben-Gurion and Eytan, Javits mentioned the main points of U.S. policy in the Middle East and heard about the risk posed by Soviet penetration of the Middle East and Africa through the reinforcement of Nasser (see entries in Ben-Gurion's diary for 25 and 26 November 1956. See also no. 154).
2. See no. 91.
3. See no. 96.
4. See no. 105.

103. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 13 November 1956

Coded Tel. TNW663; Outg.: 130.09/2377/4

Summary

Herzog submits the following assessment of the situation for Eban's consideration:

1) There is increasing appreciation of the significance of the Soviet threat in the Middle East in Washington and there is an inclination to revert to Western unity.
2) The U.S. press is leaning towards accepting that Israel should not be required to return to the status quo ante.
3) Israel's freedom of manoeuvre regarding the withdrawal depends on the crystallisation of these processes.
4) Once Hammarskjöld returns from Cairo and the U.N. force arrives at the Suez Canal, Hammarskjöld and the U.N. will step up the pressure on Israel to keep its promise to withdraw.
5) Israel's efforts should be directed to influencing the White House both from within the United States and via other countries to stake out a clear position on the Soviet threat. The foreign minister hopes that it will be possible to act in concert with other foreign ministers at the U.N. Israel should try to influence both U.S. public opinion and the U.N. so that by the date of the U.N. decision regarding withdrawal an atmosphere will have been created for understanding Israel's demand. Israel should also work on Hammarskjöld to get him to change his approach.

Note

1. See no. 94.

104. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 13 November 1956

Coded Tel. WIA977; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

In a conversation with Murphy, Shiloah raised Israel's demands in the spirit of the prime minister's discussion with Lawson.[1] He also warned against American failure to respond publicly and assertively to Soviet incitement and threats. Murphy replied that the United States is aware of the Soviet danger and is currently considering its response. Shiloah reiterated the risk inherent in relying exclusively on the U.N., saying that in effect any serious American initiative in the General Assembly is doomed to failure due to the crystallisation of an Arab-Soviet-Asian majority of over a third of the Assembly.

The upshot of Murphy's statements is that there are differences of opinion in the State Department regarding the political line. He himself concurs with Israel's assessment.

Shiloah raised the question of renewing the various economic projects that had been suspended in view of the crisis,[2] noting that the president's letter to the prime minister stressed his desire for maintaining the friendship between the two countries.[3] Murphy promised to address the resumption of regular activities.

Notes

1. See no. 91.
2. See no. 25, note 1.
3. See no. 70.

105. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog (Jerusalem) and E. Elath (London). 13 November 1956

Coded Tel. NTEA41; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

In a confidential personal conversation with Eban, Lloyd sought to clear up the misunderstandings between the two countries. He explained that Britain had not betrayed Israel. He was compelled to raise the question of a withdrawal[1] on the assumption that Israel also intended to withdraw once it obtained guarantees of security and freedom of navigation. The British government did not commit itself to insisting that Israel withdraw from Gaza or anywhere else until it was assured freedom of passage in the Gulf.

Lloyd agreed that the reason the offensive had gone awry was because the troop landing was delayed. If the Americans had evinced even hostile neutrality, the cabinet might have decided to go on for another two days. On the other hand, he does not consider the operation a failure; there are huge advantages to the fact that Nasser had been weakened and his military and Arab honour sullied.

Lloyd expressed willingness to cooperate and confer in the efforts to move closer to the United States. He said that the American assumption that the Suez problem could have been solved without the use of force was baseless.

Eban explained that Eisenhower himself was the key, emphasising that it was crucial to deter the U.S. government from dwelling on the past and to convince them that it would be a mistake to strengthen Nasser or to restore dangerous situations such as the blockade and the posting of Egyptian troops in Sinai. Lloyd stated that Britain would not withdraw until an Israeli-Egyptian settlement was achieved. The British and French presence on the Canal and the Israeli soldiers in Sinai constitute important cards that should not be given away for nothing. As for the Tiran Straits,

he suggested that if an Israeli force is not permitted to be there, perhaps the area would be demilitarised, or a U.N. force would be deployed there. As for Gaza, the question is whether Israel would want to contribute to resolving the refugee problem in exchange for recognition of its status in Gaza.

Eban expressed concern that the formal logic of the U.N. would generate pressure to restore the status quo ante, and argued that it was essential that the British and Israeli delegations work to prevent this.

Notes

1. See no. 50, notes 2 and 3.
2. Joxe, the secretary-general of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs , expressed the same view in a meeting with Tsur and Najar: France's position is that the question of the U.N., force should be linked with international control over the Canal, as this is the justification for its establishment. France would fight to the last against the attempt to remove the Anglo-French troops from Egypt before international supervision of the Canal was arranged (see Tsur to the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, Tel. 999, 13 November 1956, 130.09/2347/2).
3. See Editorial Note no. 45.

106. M. Fischer (Ankara) to the West European Division. 13 November 1956

Coded Tel 545; Inc.: 130.09/2289/13

Summary

In a meeting with Birgi, Fischer asked him to convey to the Turkish government Israel's reasons for going to war. Birgi indicated that he entirely concurred with Fischer's argument that the war had revealed the full magnitude of the risk of Soviet penetration of the Middle East. He added that the Turkish government was extremely apprehensive over the situation, as it was inconceivable that the Soviets would not try to regain the positions they had lost as a result of the offensive against Egypt. The Turkish government has vigorously demanded that the U.S. government discuss immediately taking measures to restrain the Soviets, just as the formation of NATO had reshaped a grave situation in a different period.

As for the Teheran conference,[2] Birgi stated that the wording of the resolution concerning negotiations on the basis of the U.N. resolution of 1947 had been prepared by the other participants before they arrived. He claimed that despite the condemnation it contained, which was included for propaganda purposes, there was an atmosphere of complete understanding regarding the background to the conflict

between Israel and its neighbours. As for the Baghdad declaration[3] published the next day, this surprised both Turkey and Iran, but it did not worry them due to its propaganda character.

Notes

1. See no. 89.
2. On 7 November four heads of member states of the Baghdad Pact (excluding the U.K). met in Teheran to discuss the situation in the Middle East. A declaration issued upon the conclusion of the talks stated that the participants believe that in order to ensure peace in the region, the Arab-Israeli conflict should be resolved on the basis of the U.N. resolution of 29 November 1947.
3. An official Iraqi announcement published on 8 November stated that Iraq had changed its policy concerning the Palestine problem. Iraq retracted its proposal to resolve the problem on the basis of the U.N. Assembly resolution of 29 November 1947, and would henceforth demand that the Jews return to their countries of origin while a million Arab refugees return to Palestine. Since Israel, by its very existence, is contingent upon a breach of the peace and is incapable of refraining from a policy of aggressive expansionism, it must be eliminated. Its elimination would remove this constant threat to peace and security in the Middle East.
   Both the Iraqi foreign minister and Nuri al-Said subsequently reiterated this declaration (see the British Commonwealth division to the Israel embassy in London, Tel. 577, 18 December 1956, 130.09/2321/3).

107. A. Chelouche (Moscow) to the East European Division. 13 November 1956

Coded Tel. 706; Inc.: 130.09/2326/8

Summary

In a conversation with Semyonov, the Soviet joint deputy minister of foreign affairs, Chelouche said that the U.N. has an obligation to call on the Arabs to desist from their belligerent policies towards Israel. The U.N. should also bring about direct negotiations on a solution of their mutual problems and a peace agreement. The U.S.S.R., as a key member of the U.N. and a country that affirms its allegiance to U.N. principles, can play a significant role here.

Semyonov replied that he would convey Chelouche's message, and that the opinion of the Soviet government concerning the situation in the Middle East and Israel's policies finds expression in Bulganin's letter of 5 November.[2] He has nothing to add to that at present.

Notes

1. This telegram from Eytan to the Israel missions abroad reads as follows: "Approach the foreign ministry at the highest possible level and propose that they demand that Egypt enter into direct peace negotiations with us without delay. The time is ripe for such a demand, which should of course be presented as their initiative, not ours" (9 November 1956, in file 130.02/2410/1).
2. No. 61.

108. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan. 13 November 1956

Coded Tel 771; Inc.: 130.15/3738/24

Summary

Sasson believes that when Israel demands to annex the Gaza Strip, its position will be stronger and more persuasive if it appears to be trying to contribute to eliminating the refugee problem, by rapidly absorbing many of the refugees. In such an event it is crucial that the number of refugees in the Strip appear to be greater, and no less than the number cited in the reports of UNRWA (the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East).

The fact that Israel will appear as a country that is willing to accept the Strip and absorb a large number of refugees will not only earn it sympathy and support in the U.N. and the United States but will also encourage the U.N. and other parties to insist that the Arab countries absorb the refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, in order to resolve the problem for good. It would also be advisable to add that Israel is willing to pay compensation to the other refugees.

109. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to M. Kidron (New York). 14 November 1956

Orig.: 93.03/3064/2

Summary

Eytan reviews for Kidron the replies of various countries (Italy, Holland, Burma, South Africa, Austria, Finland, Argentina, Ethiopia and Norway) to Israel's request that they approach Egypt in their own names with the demand that it enter into direct peace negotiations with Israel.[1]

Eytan asks Kidron to discuss the issue with the foreign minister and members of the Israel delegation. He sees here a basis for joint action by a number of countries, and holds that it would be a pity to waste the strong desire around the world for peace in the Middle East and the readiness of governments to act to that end.

Notes

1. See no. 107, note 1.
2. The letter is not in the file, but a report concerning a meeting between the Israel minister to Austria, Shmuel Bentsur, and the director general of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs contains information about Austria's position. Austria was not willing to launch its own initiative on behalf of peace in the Middle East, but would support such a proposal if floated by others (see the U.S. division to the Israel permanent mission to the U.N., 14 November 1956, 93.01/2213/12).

110. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 14 November 1956

Coded Circular Tel. 379; Outg.: 130.02/2414/28

Summary

Eytan cautions that in public announcements it is important to refrain from making any remark that might give the impression that Israel is less than faithful to the prime minister's declarations to the U.S. president and the foreign minister's declarations to the U.N. secretary-general.[1] Nor should any effort be made in dealings with the U.N. to elaborate on Israel's understanding of the term "satisfactory arrangements," which Israel stipulated as a condition for its withdrawal. At this stage Israel should abstain from publicly articulating political objectives. Efforts should nevertheless be made to motivate various public figures and the press to argue that it is inconceivable that the Egyptian threat against Israel be renewed from within Sinai and Gaza and that the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba continue to be closed to Israeli shipping.

Notes

1. See no. 95.
   In response to reports published in the foreign press, the Foreign Ministry spokesman announced on 12 November that the Israeli government abides by its decision to withdraw its troops from Sinai once satisfactory arrangements had been made with the U.N. concerning the international force, in keeping with the contents of the letter

to the U.N. secretary-general (Israel Correspondence Agency, 13 November 1956, 93.03/3064/2).
2. See no. 79.

111. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (New York). 15 November 1956

Coded Tel. 902; Outg.: 130.09/2332/2

Summary

Tekoah reports that highly confidential sources have indicated that the crux of the argument between Hammarskjöld and Nasser was the latter's demand that the international force leave Egypt if Egypt withdrew its consent to deployment of the force on its territory. Hammarskjöld replied that Egypt was entitled to retain the right to withdraw its consent, but that to do so before the force had concluded its mission as stipulated in the Assembly resolution would contradict Egypt's consent to let the force enter. Nasser was adamant, and refused to assent to the entry of the force pending clarification of the issue. Hammarskjöld announced that he was willing to come to Cairo to discuss this and other matters, but insisted that he arrive together with the first units of the force and not before.

One of the questions brought up was the composition of the force. Nasser was opposed to the inclusion of units from NATO states.[1] Hammarskjöld warned him that if no arrangement was forthcoming, he would have to take the matter up with the Assembly.

Concomitantly Hammarskjöld promised Nasser that the U.N. force was not intended to guarantee any particular resolution of the Suez problem.

Note

1. Egypt also opposed the participation of countries belonging to the British Commonwealth, such as India, in the U.N. force (see the report on the conversation with Kirkpatrick, the permanent under-secretary of state for foreign affairs, Avner to the British Commonwealth division, Tel. 894, 12 November 1956, 130.09/2321/4).

112. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 15 November 1956

Coded Tel. TNW677; Outg.: 130.02/2419/4

Summary

Herzog asks the following questions:

1) What was the secretary-general's reaction to the French-British statement that the evacuation of their troops would depend on the effectiveness of the international force in guaranteeing freedom of navigation[1]?
2) Since once the international force is introduced into the Canal zone the above position will mandate protracted negotiations,[2] will the negotiations between the secretary-general and Israel regarding the withdrawal of its troops be delayed as well, or will he approach Israel simultaneously, independently of the question of the British and French troops?
3) To what extent are the U.N. delegations becoming conscious of the fact that Israel too need not withdraw unconditionally?
4) While publicly it is necessary to continue saying that Israel will abide by its commitment to the secretary-general, and that it awaits his request, Israel must concurrently prepare terms for negotiations which are based as much as possible on U.N. resolutions. The international force must "secure and supervise cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms of the Resolution of November 2, 1956."[3]

   When the time comes, will Israel be able to argue that "cessation of hostilities" also includes the cessation of Fedaiyun operations and removal of the blockade and that "all the terms" also includes the article in the resolution concerning freedom of navigation and an end to troop movements and introduction of weapons into the region, meaning that the Soviets will have to stop sending arms to Egypt and Syria?

Notes

1. Upon conclusion of the meeting between the heads of state of Britain and France in London on 14 November a joint statement was issued to the effect that the two countries had decided to oppose strongly any Egyptian attempt to empty the U.N. resolutions concerning peace in the Middle East of content. It was also agreed that the withdrawal of British and French troops from Egypt would be contingent upon the effective functioning of the prospective U.N. force and its success in guaranteeing freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal.
2. Kirkpatrick stated in a conversation with Avner that the foreign secretary, Lloyd, had reached an understanding with Hammarskjöld that the Assembly resolution did not

require the removal of all troops from Egypt the moment the first units of the U.N. force arrived. The evacuation would be gradual (see Avner to the Foreign Ministry, Tel. 921, 15 November 1956, 130.09/2321/4).

3. See Editorial Note no. 11.

113. Note from Premier N. Bulganin (Moscow) to Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion. 15 November 1956

Copy (translated from Russian)[1]: 130.09/2326/8

Summary

Bulganin dismisses Ben-Gurion's contention in his letter to the Soviet premier[2] that the reason for the Israeli military offensive against Egypt was the need for self-defence. He lays all the blame on Israel, just as, according to him, the Security Council and the U.N. General Assembly did as well. Ben-Gurion's renunciation of the armistice agreements in his Knesset address[3] and his making a troop withdrawal conditional on agreements with the U.N. regarding the introduction of an international force into the region contradict, in Bulganin's view, Ben-Gurion's claim that Israel aspires to peaceful relations with its neighbours. The Soviet government is convinced that Israel's current policy, which is designed to foment hatred among the Arabs and to oppress them, constitutes a threat to peace in general and to the existence of Israel. Such a policy can serve only the interests of foreign powers that are striving to reestablish a colonial order in the region.

The Soviet Union warned the Israel government in the past about the dangerous consequences of aggressive military action against Arab states, and regrets that Israel did not listen. The Soviets now demand an immediate Israeli withdrawal, and the payment of reparations to Egypt by Israel, France and Britain for the damage it sustained due to the destruction of cities, injury to the population, the halting of operation of the Suez Canal and the damage done to its installations.

Furthermore, in order to stabilise the situation in the Near East and to erase the effects of the aggression against Egypt, the Soviet government believes it imperative to take measures to preclude new provocations on the part of Israel against neighbouring countries, and to ensure a stable peace and quiet in the region. The international force to be established by the U.N. must be stationed on both sides of the border between Israel and Egypt that was fixed in the armistice agreement.

Notes

1. The document was translated from the Russian by the Israel embassy in Moscow. See B. Pinkus, *Special Relations* [Hebrew], Sede Boqer, 2007, p. 551.

2. See no. 83.
3. See Editorial Note no. 77.
4. See no. 61.
5. See no. 69.
6. See no. 79.
7. Bulganin sent Notes to the premiers of Britain and France simultaneously with his Note to Israel.

114. A. Eban (Washington) to W. Eytan. 15 November 1956

Coded Tel. NYTA187; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban relates that Bulganin's Note casting doubt on the very existence of the State of Israel[1] has evoked astonishment. The foreign minister will try to see Shepilov[2] in order to demand a clarification concerning whether the U.S.S.R. intends to attack Israel. Eban will also discuss the matter in the State Department. The delegation is considering filing a complaint with the Security Council or the General Assembly over the Soviet Union's threats and interference in Israel's negotiations with the U.N. Eban requests guidance from the prime minister.[3]

Notes

1. In his Note to Ben-Gurion Bulganin also spoke of "Israel's annihilation." See no. 113.
2. Dimitri Shepilov, Soviet minister for foreign affairs.
3. The idea of filing a complaint came from Meir, who was attending the U.N. Assembly deliberations in New York. According to her, the president of the Security Council, Nasrollah Entezam (head of the Iranian delegation to the U.N)., was willing to convene the Council. The Foreign Ministry's position, however, was that there was no need to approach the Security Council, and that it would be sufficient to file a complaint with the president of the Assembly (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 16 November 1956).

115. M. Comay (New York) to W. Eytan. 16 November 1956

Coded Tel. X946; Inc.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Comay reports on a conversation between Meir, Eban and Pearson. The foreign minister explained the danger that Israel had faced and her concern that the current policy of the U.N. and the United States would rehabilitate Nasser and enable the Soviet Union to seize control. She emphasised that Egypt must not be allowed to return to Gaza, to blockade the Gulf of Aqaba or to return its army to its Sinai bases.

Pearson agreed completely that there should be no reversion to the status quo ante and assumed that the crisis itself had created an opening for a new arrangement. The difficulty, however, was that the Soviets were exploiting the rift between the Western powers, and thus it was imperative to reunite them. He expressed understanding for Israel's arguments concerning Gaza and inquired about the possibility of demilitarising Sinai and the Straits of Tiran. It was notable that he did not try to insist on an unconditional evacuation. He also opposed the restoration of Egyptian control over the Suez Canal. Pearson vigorously rejected the Egyptian conditions for introducing an international force into the region.[1] On the other hand, he did not specify what he thought the functions and prerogatives of the force should be.

As for the debates at the U.N., he said that the best possible outcome was achieved under the circumstances. A great deal of effort was invested to prevent worse resolutions from passing the Assembly, which would have condemned Israel as the aggressor.

Eban pointed out that the American resolution[4] would fail to attain the necessary majority, since the Arabs would oppose it with the support of the Asians and the Soviets. Pearson replied that the Assembly plenum was not capable of addressing the problem, and it should be delegated to a committee and afterwards to a small group, as was done regarding the partition resolution in 1947.

Notes

1. See no. 111.
2. Canada was a member of this committee, which was appointed to act in conjunction with the secretary-general in the matter of the U.N. force. See no. 73, note 2.
3. The British Commonwealth.
4. The United States again placed on the Assembly's agenda the two resolutions it had sponsored on 3 November proposing the appointment of two committees, one to resolve the problems of the Middle East and the second to resolve the problem of navigation in

the Suez Canal. Again the resolutions were not brought to a vote due to the opposition of the Afro-Asian bloc. See Editorial Note no. 45.

116. A. Eban (New York) to W. Eytan. 16 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA190; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban reports on a conversation between Foreign Minister Meir and the foreign ministers of Britain, Norway and the Netherlands (Lloyd, Lange and Luns respectively). Luns identified with Israel on all counts, promising assistance in both the U.N. and Washington. He promised that the Netherlands would provide considerable backing regarding the conditions for troop withdrawals.

Lange was friendly but expressed clear reservations concerning the wisdom of the campaign conducted by Israel, Britain and France. On the other hand, he was encouraging regarding Israel's demands for the present and in the future.

Lloyd was embarrassed at the mention of the statement issued by the Foreign Office spokesman in London.[1] He stressed that Britain did not insist on a pullback of Israeli troops and hoped that their positions could be aligned. He expressed concern that Hammarskjöld might display weakness in his talks with Nasser. Britain would like to insist on remaining on the Canal until the U.N. guarantees that the international force will remain there until an arrangement is reached for the Canal.[2] Lloyd argued that apprehensions concerning an oil cut-off by the Arab countries without compensation from the United States generate hesitation.

The topic of the American peace proposal[3] was also broached, and the Israelis expressed doubt both regarding the proposal's effectiveness and its chances of being adopted by the Assembly.

Notes

1. On 13 November the spokesman of the Foreign Office announced that Britain accepted the U.N. resolution regarding a total withdrawal, and therefore supported all clauses of the resolution, including that calling on Israel to return to the 1949 armistice lines (see Avner to the Foreign Ministry, Tel. 921, 15 November 1956, 130.09/2321/4).
2. See no. 112, note 2.
3. See Editorial Note no. 45, see also no. 115, note 4.

117. A. Eban (New York) to W. Eytan. 16 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA185; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

In a conversation with Pineau, the foreign minister and Eban explained the need to bring the United States back into alliance with Britain and France and to drive home the likely consequences of restoring Nasser to his former status. They noted that the chances of success would increase if the foreign ministers of Europe and NATO worked together vis-à-vis the U.S. Administration. Pineau promised to make a personal effort in Washington and to speak with the other foreign ministers. It was agreed that they would act separately but always in coordination with one another.

Meir and Eban vigorously reiterated Israel's demand that Egyptian troops not be allowed back into Sinai, Gaza and the islands. Pineau indicated his full agreement and mentioned that he had been surprised to discover in his conversation with Hammarskjöld that the latter vehemently refused to accept Nasser's conditions for the international force,[1] siding instead with proposals that were acceptable to France. The foreign minister warned him against excessive reliance upon Hammarskjöld's staying power, emphasizing that a realistic arrangement for the problems of Sinai, Gaza and the Gulf of Aqaba would determine the chances of peace with Egypt for many years to come.

Pineau related that Lodge had hinted to him that if Israel would resolve a large part of the refugee problem, it would attain international recognition concerning its status in Gaza. Pineau warned him that it was critical to prevent a recurrence of the conditions that had caused the crisis, and that if they did recur Israel would no doubt return to Sinai with French assistance.

Note

1. See no. 111.

118. Z. Argaman (New York) to W. Eytan. 16 November 1956

Coded Tel. WNTA144; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Argaman spoke with Zarubin,[1] a member of the Soviet delegation to the U.N., and asked for a clarification of the Soviet Union's position in view of Bulganin's two Notes.[2]

Zarubin said that:

1) The U.S.S.R. has always supported and still supports a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict through exclusively peaceful means. In its opinion the attack on Egypt was a thoughtless and very dangerous act. In mentioning the threat posed to Israel Bulganin was referring to the hatred and hostility the Israeli attack had evoked among the Arab peoples, a hatred which more than ever poses a threat to Israel's safety.

   It is necessary to arrive at a peace agreement between Israel and the Arabs, and this was the intention of the U.S.S.R.'s statement of 17 April.[3] There was no possibility of arriving at a solution before Israel evacuated its troops from Egypt, including the Gaza Strip. There is presumably no chance of Egypt agreeing to any negotiations before that. If Israel's aim was to guarantee its security, it achieved this via the U.N. decision to separate the sides by means of an international force. This will prevent clashes on the borders and create the requisite atmosphere for peace.
2) The wording of Bulganin's letters to Israel is no harsher than that of his letters to Britain and France. Zarubin has no explanation for what motivated the Soviet government to recall its ambassador from Israel[4] and cancel the oil contract.[5] He agrees that these actions constitute sanctions that were not mandated by the U.N.
3) He did not attempt to whitewash Nasser, and contented himself with pointing out that even before the latter rose to power Israel's relations with the Arabs were not of the best.

   As for the question of the volunteers from the Soviet Union, he avoided voicing an opinion, saying only that citizens are entitled to express their desire to come to the aid of a country that has been attacked, but that this fact does not determine the government's position.
4) The Soviet Union's position on Israel prior to the attack was expressed by its agreement to supply the country with large quantities of oil despite pressure from the Arabs.[6] The Soviets did this in consideration of Israel's special needs given the Egyptian blockade of the Canal, in the hope that over the course of time the Egyptians would also come to realise that the blockade is pointless.

Notes

1. Georgi Zarubin, the Soviet ambassador to the United States.
2. Nos. 61, 113.
3. On 17 April 1956 the Soviet Foreign Ministry issued a statement calling on the U.N. to reinforce peace in Palestine and affirming that the Soviet Union was willing to help promote an Arab-Israeli agreement. The statement included three points: 1. The Soviet Union would support any U.N. activity whose aim was to establish peace in Palestine. 2. Steps should be taken to realize this objective without outside interference. 3. The question of Palestine should be resolved by taking into account the interests of all the interested parties (see Vol. 11, no. 205).
4. See Editorial Note no. 60.
5. See no. 75.
6. The Soviet Union had supplied petroleum and heating oil to Israel since February 1954 (see Vol. 9, no. 379, note 1), and in July 1956 a second agreement was signed with the Soviet oil export company increasing Israel's oil quota for 1957–1958. According to this agreement another company was to supply steel pipes to Israel.

119. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington and the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 16 November 1956

Coded Tel. GHA78; Inc.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

The East European division analyses Bulganin's Note:[1]

1) The Soviet Union has begun to stress the political aspect of the campaign and is applying pressure on Israel through new demands such as reparations for Egypt, the restoration of property and the stationing of the U.N. force on both sides of the armistice lines.
2) The brutal threats of the use of force have lessened, but one should not infer from the Note that there is any change in the Soviet Union's desire to retain its footholds in the Middle East and to reinforce them through additional deliveries of arms and sending more experts.
3) It is not inconceivable that the Soviets have toned down their threats of military intervention in order to soothe the United States and thereby halt or slow the process of its awakening, while simultaneously continuing to expand their military bases in the Middle East. For this reason, in light of Bulganin's second Note, it is even more essential that the United States takes a determined stance against Soviet penetration.

4) The document proves that the U.S.S.R. has decided to fan Arab hatred of Israel and to act against an Arab-Israeli settlement. Its fresh demands can only be interpreted as an attempt to make any settlement in the Middle East conditional on terms that Israel clearly cannot accept.

Note

1. See no. 113.

120. British Commonwealth Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in London. 18 November 1956

Coded Tel. 469; Outg.: 130.09/2321/3

Summary

The division transmits instructions to Elath in advance of his meeting with Eden. He should:

1) try to elicit from Eden exactly what line Britain is planning to take with regard to the international force, and what its intentions are concerning the withdrawal of its troops from the Canal zone. Will they insist that the area not be evacuated until the operation of the Canal and freedom of navigation in it have been guaranteed, and what do they know about Hammarskjöld's plans on the matter?[1]
2) try to get their support for preventing pressure on Israel to withdraw its troops from Sinai until border security is achieved and the Egyptian threat removed. In this context he should raise the possibility of demilitarising Sinai. Freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Canal must also be assured. Under no circumstances should Israel return to the situation of status quo ante, namely, the renewal of all the dangers threatening it and the region, the restoration of Nasser to his former status, the strengthening of his position among Arab countries and the opening up of the entire region to Soviet influence.
3) There can be no return to the armistice agreement with Egypt. The situation should be exploited in order to try and reach a permanent settlement, and to prompt direct negotiations. Events have demonstrated the strong connection between peace in the Middle East and world peace. Israel has been warned that the responsibility for world peace lies in its hands.[2] Now Nasser should be warned that the responsibility will rest on him if he does not agree to make peace in the region.

4) He should emphasise the necessity of reaching a new joint Western position in order to prevent increased Soviet penetration of the Middle East. Success depends on the position of the United States. In this context he should ascertain the content of the joint resolution that the three Western Powers are about to introduce at the U.N.
5) In Bulganin's Note to Eden and Mollet, an attempt was made to drive a wedge between Israel and Britain and France. He should explain the risk inherent in this tactic and inquire regarding Britain's assessment of the Russian threat. Does Britain know anything about the dispatch of arms and volunteers to the region?
6) It would also be desirable to raise the problem of the supply of fuel to Israel.

Notes

1. The foreign ministers of Britain and France, who were in New York on the occasion of the convening of the U.N. General Assembly, met with acting Secretary of State Hoover. They sought to persuade him that the United States should declare explicitly that the U.N. force to be deployed in Egypt would remain in the area of the Suez Canal and would act to promote a general settlement in the region, and not only to remove the British and French troops from Egypt. At this stage, however, the United States preferred not to intervene in the evacuation arrangements and the implementation of Security Council resolutions. Washington chose to give the U.N. secretary-general a free hand in conducting negotiations with Nasser on the conditions for the deployment of the U.N. force in Egypt. See no. 136.
2. See Editorial Note no. 77.

121. Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to Premier N. Bulganin (Moscow). 18 November 1956

Copy: 130.09/2377/4

Summary

Ben-Gurion responds to the arguments contained in Bulganin's Note of 15 November 1956.[1] He reviews at length the chain of events from the decision on partition of Palestine until the attainment of the armistice agreements with the Arab countries, whose purpose it was to assist in restoring permanent peace to Palestine. Despite Egypt's signature on this agreement, its rulers have claimed that Egypt is in a state of war with Israel.

In its meeting on 1 September 1951, the Security Council explicitly denied the right of any state that was a signatory to the armistice agreements to claim that it

was still in a state of war. Egypt defied this decision, also imposed an economic boycott on Israel and tried through tactics of intimidation to influence economic organisations in various countries to sever all economic ties with Israel.

In violation of the Constantinople Convention of 1888 regarding freedom of navigation for all nations in the Suez Canal, and in contravention of the Security Council resolution of 1 September 1951, Egypt continued to maintain a naval blockade against Israel in the Canal, even expanding the blockade to the straits of the Red Sea. Egypt also organised Fedaiyun units, which were sent from the Gaza Strip and Sinai into Israel to perpetrate acts of murder, robbery and sabotage. Israel has documents in its possession proving administrative ties between the Fedaiyun and Egyptian military units.

Recently the threat to Israel's very existence has escalated: Egypt has concluded military agreements with Syria and Jordan, whose stated purpose is the annihilation of Israel; Fedaiyun operations, which had ceased during the war, have been renewed, and the large amount of military equipment that was destroyed in the Sinai desert is proof of Nasser's intentions and preparations. Ben-Gurion contends that in his Knesset speech of 7 November he did not refer to all of the armistice agreements as cancelled, only that with Egypt, after the latter had systematically violated the agreement for years.

Following the latest resolution of the General Assembly Israel announced that it had implemented a cease-fire and was willing to withdraw its troops from Egypt, once satisfactory arrangements were in place with the U.N. regarding the international force mentioned in the Assembly resolution.[3]

As for the question of reparations — Israel had not destroyed a single Egyptian city, nor did it sabotage the Canal, which was blocked by the Egyptians themselves. The army was given strict orders not to harm civilians, and this order was respected. If anyone is entitled to reparations, it is Israel.

Ben-Gurion points out with sorrow that a number of expressions in Bulganin's Note will not be interpreted by Arab rulers as an encouragement to make peace in the region, and are not consistent with the norms of behaviour prevailing among member countries of the United Nations.

Notes

1. See no. 113.
2. See no. 83.
3. See no. 79.

122. M. Kidron (New York) to W. Eytan. 19 November 1956

Coded Tel. X962; Inc.: 130.09/2333/3

Notes

1. See no. 123.
2. Hammarskjöld returned from a two day visit to Cairo, where he met with Nasser and worked out the terms for allowing the U.N. force to begin operating in Egypt. They also agreed that the U.N. would participate in the clearance of the Suez Canal and removing the boats that Egypt had sunk there in order to block the Canal. The report on this visit was presented to the advisory committee on 20 November (see no. 127, note 4).
3. See no. 80.

123. G. Meir (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 19 November 1956

Coded Tel. X961; Inc.: 130.09/2333/3

Summary

In a conversation with Meir, Hammarskjöld referred to the report he had received regarding Rafah. According to the report, there were some 50 people killed there and injured persons as well.[1] In view of this, he asked if Israel would agree to introduce a new type of observer into both Rafah and Gaza. Hammarskjöld noted that there was a similar situation in Port Said, and that he was deploying part of the international force there in order to keep things quiet.[2] Meir asks Ben-Gurion for his opinion on the matter and for details about what had happened at Rafah.

As for the Fedaiyun, Hammarskjöld said that all he could do was to ask Egypt, as he had asked Israel about Rafah. Of course he insists that there be no linkage between the issues. The foreign minister mentioned that she had conveyed several queries to Egypt through him without receiving an answer, one of which concerned the Fedaiyun.

Notes

1. Riots had taken place in Rafah on 12 November which were suppressed by the Israeli troops. See no. 125 and also the international organisations division to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circular Tel. 385, 15 November 1956, 130.09/2377/4.
2. See also the foreign minister's report concerning the substance of her talk with Hammarskjöld, summary of morning meeting of the Israel permanent mission to the U.N., 20 November 1956, 93.08/381/5.

3. See no. 125.

124. U.S. Embassy in Israel to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 November 1956

Message: 130.09/2491/6

Notes

1. On 20 November the Foreign Ministry sent the Israel missions abroad the following data concerning the situation in Gaza:
   A) Food continues to be distributed to the refugees as usual by UNRWA and CARE (the Cooperative for American Remittance to Everywhere).
   B) Garbage disposal, water and electricity services are operating normally. The Baptist hospital is getting everything it needs. A team of Egyptian doctors continues to treat the patients, who include wounded Egyptian soldiers.
   C) The 46 Christian institutions in Gaza — Orthodox, Coptic, Protestant and Roman Catholic — continue to operate as usual. So do the four churches. No Christian institution sustained damage from any military operation and no complaints have been received.
   D) Negotiations concerning the composition of the municipality in Gaza are almost complete.
   E) Some of the local police force continues to operate. A reorganisation of the police is planned, in which local officers will be given a role.
   F) Gaza farmers have picked half a million crates of oranges. The export agreements that were concluded before Israel's entry will be carried out in cooperation with the owners of the groves. See Coded Circular Tel. 417, 20 November 1956, 130.09/2377/4.

125. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 20 November 1956

Coded Tel. 948; Outg.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Herzog transmits to Meir data from the Prime Minister's Office concerning the events in Rafah. Due to the rotation of troops there the inhabitants received the impression that the IDF was about to pull out. The curfew was violated, on 10 November mass riots began, the warehouse of UNRWA was looted and the rioters even fired shots. Egyptian soldiers and Fedaiyun were involved in inciting

the disturbances. Israeli soldiers killed 48 people while dispersing the riots. In the army's estimate, some 5,000 Egyptian and Palestinian soldiers and Fedaiyun have remained in Gaza, and there is a plentiful supply of weapons that were distributed to the inhabitants by Egypt.

The prime minister emphasises that in view of the international situation the strictest orders were given to the soldiers to be as restrained as possible.

Notes

1. No. 123.
2. See Herzog to Kidron, Tel. 947, 20 November 1956, 130.02/2459/1. The telegram states: "Supplying the answers [to Hammarskjöld] would seem to have the following advantages:
   A) You do not leave the secretary-general without a reply.
   B) He has something to report to the Assembly, instead of saying that he has yet to hear anything from the Israeli government.
   C) We will gain time while not yet revealing our basic position, without committing ourselves to specific demands for now, and without entering into a direct argument with him, the echoes of which would immediately reach the Assembly."

126. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to J. Tsur (Paris). 20 November 1956

Copy: 93.04/325/9

Summary

Bartur raises various possibilities for laying an oil pipeline from Eilat to the Mediterranean. At the first stage the plan is to lay a small pipe that can carry 4 to 8 million tons, if larger pipes cannot be acquired quickly, primarily in order to cover Israel's urgent fuel needs.

In Bartur's opinion the oil pipeline is the most important political move that Israel can make at the moment to ensure free passage in the Gulf of Aqaba. In order to earn credit in Western public opinion the decisive value of Israel, which is the only alternative to Suez as a bridge between Europe and Asia, must be emphasised both in public relations campaigns and in contacts with Western governments.

He suggests investigating, both with government officials and with representatives of Lazard Frères,[1] the possibility of bringing in other Western European organisations as partners in the pipeline, in order to highlight the interest that Western Europe as a whole must have in creating alternative outlets. Just introducing this idea in Western Europe while the battle at the U.N. is underway could be useful to Israel.

Note

1. A French investment bank. Already at this preliminary stage the bank shrank from involvement in the pipeline project due to U.S. pressure on the bank's American subsidiary. The bank's management stated that it would reconsider the matter only once U.S. support was assured (see Tsur to the director general of the Foreign Ministry and Bartur, Tel. 71, 22 November 1956, 130.02/2459/4, and also Galli to Bartur and Kozloff, Tel. 78, 22 November 1956, 13002/2459/4).

127. M. Kidron (New York) to W. Eytan. 21 November 1956

Coded Tel. XA984; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Kidron reports on a conversation the foreign minister and Eban held with the secretary-general.

Meir raised the subject of the riots in Rafah.[1] After the secretary-general brought up a series of accusations against Israel, Meir rejected the attempt to dwell on the past and asked whether he had any information concerning unrest in the area after 12 November. The secretary-general answered in the negative, but noted that there were no observers in Rafah. In view of the responsibility resting on him according to the General Assembly resolution, he was bound to reiterate officially his demand that Israel permit the entry of observers from the U.N. force into the region. This is what the British and French did in Port Said.

Hammarskjöld stated that he was waiting for Israel's answers to the questions he had raised and for its clarification of the term "satisfactory arrangements" with regard to the U.N. force. Eban explained that such arrangements would include an end to the blockade in the straits and a guarantee against the renewal of attacks from bases in the Sinai and the Gaza Strip. The secretary-general argued that troop withdrawal should not be made conditional on final arrangements, and said that if Israel insists on these terms it is equivalent to a refusal to withdraw its forces from Sinai. Eban remarked that the withdrawal could lead either to a final settlement or to an explosion.

The foreign minister inquired concerning the right to free passage in the Suez Canal mentioned in the resolution of 2 November.[5] The secretary-general replied that Egypt still accepted the arrangement that was concluded between Fawzi and himself.[6] The proposed American resolution, which was to be amended, would enable this plan to be carried out.[7] The role of the U.N. force did not include guaranteeing free passage in the Canal, as the force did not exist for purposes of implementing the 2 November resolution. Hammarskjöld stressed that his main job

at present was to ensure the Canal was cleared, and he would therefore delegate the task of handling the withdrawal of the Israeli troops to one of his assistants.

Notes

1. See no. 125.
2. No information was found concerning this letter.
3. See no. 128.
4. In the report Hammarskjöld presented to the advisory committee on 20 November he discussed the terms for the U.N. force's operation in Egypt and its role and manner of operation there, as agreed with Nasser during Hammarskjöld's visit to Egypt. Differences of opinion arose within the committee concerning the interpretation of the resolutions of the General Assembly on the subject of the establishment of the U.N. force. Complaints were lodged against Hammarskjöld for making far-reaching concessions to Egypt and for making the force's operation conditional on Egypt's consent to its composition, the duration of its mission, its location and its involvement in the clearance of the Suez Canal. Due to the argument in the committee and heavy French-British pressure on the secretary-general the submission of the report to the Assembly was delayed by a day, and some of the appendixes that had been attached to it were omitted (see Kidron to Herzog, X982, 21 November 1956, 130.02/2459/1, and also the summary of the meeting of the Israel permanent mission, 21 November 1956, 93.08/381/15).
5. See Editorial Note no. 11.
6. See Hammarskjöld to Meir, 4 November 1956, 130.02/2448/13.
7. See Editorial Note no. 45.
8. A. Martola, a Finnish general who served as Hammarskjöld's military advisor.

128. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to G. Meir (New York). 21 November 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/3

Notes

1. See no. 125.
2. See no. 122.
3. Since Israel considered the armistice agreement with Egypt to have been cancelled by the war, it saw no reason why U.N. observers should continue to be stationed in the Gaza Strip. See Nursella to Burns, 4 November 1956, 130.02/2436/8.
4. Meir sent Herzog a telegram advising that Israel accede to Hammarskjöld's request: "In view of the prevailing atmosphere with regard to us it is doubtful whether we will be able to prevent the dispatch of representatives of the U.N. force to Rafah. I suggest that we express willingness to accept a committee of observers that will investigate

whether things are quiet there or not, without giving them a permanent role in Rafah" (see Tel. X 981, 21 November 1956, 130.09/2333/3).

5. Meir answered this letter from Hammarskjöld on 23 November. Most of her letter was devoted to describing the return to normality in the Gaza Strip after the Rafah riots: the restoration of all civilian services, the renewed provision of water and electricity, the renewed food distribution by UNRWA and CARE and the reopening of hospitals and religious institutions.

   As for Hammarskjöld's request to station observers in Rafah, the foreign minister replied that the Israeli government consented to the dispatch of a personal representative of his to examine the situation on the ground and report back on it (see Meir to Hammarskjöld, 23 November 1956, 130.02/2448/7). On 25 November Hammarskjöld appointed two officers from the U.N. staff to investigate the situation in Rafah. On 1 December Nelson, who was in charge of the investigation, published their findings, stating that there were no grounds for the accusations levelled concerning the situation in Gaza and that civilian life had reached a proper and satisfactory state. They did not inquire into the incident in Rafah since this affair belonged to the past, and the emphasis should be on the current situation (see Tekoah to the Israel permanent mission to the U.N., Tel. 31, 1 December 1956, 130.09/2332/3).

129. A. Eban (New York) to the Secretary-General of the U.N. (New York). 21 November 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/3

Notes

1. See no. 122.
2. By this date 4 divisions had already been removed from Sinai, but at this stage Israel preferred not to give specific numbers (see *The Political Battle*, p. 96).
3. See the Foreign Ministry to the Israel permanent mission to the U.N., Tel. 824, 8 November 1956, 130.09/23332/2.
4. See no. 49.

130. E. Elath (London) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 21 November 1956

Coded Tel. 958; Inc.: 130.09/2321/4

Summary

Reilly of the British Foreign Office informed Elath that the British government had decided to stop supplying Israel with military materiel. He added that this decision had no bearing on orders for civil aviation.

In response to Elath's query concerning the reasons for this arbitrary step, he answered that they were operating in the spirit of the U.N. resolutions,[1] taking into account the fact that Israel has no need for additional weapons for self-defence given the windfall that fell into its hands during the Sinai campaign. Elath rejected this claim so long as Centurion tanks were still being sold to Iraq, a country which poses a threat to Israel's survival. He announced that Israel would not release the U.K. from the responsibility it bears according to the Tripartite Declaration[2] to maintain a balance between Israel and its neighbours.

Riley sought to persuade him not to interpret the decision as a political act, but rather as the result of a practical assessment of Israel's military capabilities after its victory in Sinai.

Notes

1. The General Assembly's resolution of 2 November (paragraph 3) calls on U.N. members to refrain from sending weapons and combat equipment to the war zones. See Editorial Note no. 11.
2. See no. 4, note 2.
3. Isser Pen, head of the Ministry of Defence purchasing mission in Britain.
4. In the wake of this discussion the permanent under-secretary of state for foreign affairs, Kirkpatrick, informed Elath on 22 November that Britain would not block the delivery of a number of items that had already been purchased, and that in future Israel would be able to buy from Britain equipment that was not necessarily destined for exclusively military purposes. He also suggested that they examine the list of requests that Israel had submitted together, and consult about what could be approved and what Israel would have to relinquish in order not to undercut the principle of the embargo imposed according to the U.N. resolution (see Elath to the British Commonwealth division, Tel. 963, 22 November 1956, 130.02/2459/4).

131. E. Najar (New York) to W. Eytan. 21 November 1956

Coded Tel. X980; Inc.: 130.09/2333/3

Summary

In a conversation with Najar and Eban, Pineau recounted a conversation that he and Lloyd had held with Hammarskjöld. Both of them were extremely critical of the secretary-general's capitulation to Nasser, and Hammarskjöld deleted whole sentences from the draft of his report. At this point the document poses no danger.[1]

In response to the secretary-general's questions, which were directed to Israel as well,[2] the French and the British are planning to say that they have already withdrawn some two-thirds of their fleet. The evacuation plans are being studied, but no final decision will be possible until the size of the international force and its ability to discharge all the responsibilities imposed on it by the U.N. resolutions are clarified.

France intends to make a supreme effort to play for political time until there is an improvement in the attitude of the United States.

Pineau told the secretary-general explicitly that France would stand firmly behind Israel on the issues of Suez, the Gulf of Aqaba and Gaza.

They both expressed concern over the flow of Soviet weapons into Syria.

Notes

1. See no. 127, note 4.
2. See Editorial Note no. 11.
3. Camille Chamoun, the president of Lebanon.
4. General Lucius Clay, formerly the commander in chief of the American forces in Europe, was appointed by the U.N. as one of the team in charge of the clearance of the Suez Canal. See also no. 138.

132. A. Harman and M. Rivlin (New York) to A. Eshel. 21 November 1956

Coded Tel. X974; Inc.: 130.09/2333/3

Note

1. The rumours that abounded on this subject were denied (see the Israel embassy in Moscow to the East European division, Tel.745, 21 November 1956, 130.09/2326/8).

133. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 22 November 1956

Coded Tel. 702; Outg.: 130.09/2339/7

Summary

Herzog informs members of the delegation that the prime minister is leaving up to them the question of whether to appear in the Assembly that night. If they decide to participate, he suggests that they reread the 21 November letter to the secretary-general,[1] while mentioning that the withdrawal has been executed to varying distances of up to 50 kilometres from the previous positions. In addition, they should express the assumption that "cessation of hostilities" also means a commitment to halt Fedaiyun operations in the future and the removal of the blockade.

They should also deny the false Soviet-Syrian claim that Israeli forces are massing on the Syrian border.[3]

Notes

1. See no. 129.
2. The prohibition of sending arms into war zones (paragraph 3), the opening of the Suez Canal to navigation and the guaranteeing of freedom of navigation there (paragraph 4).
3. The Syrian envoy to the U.N. stopped the General Assembly debate on the topic of Hungary on 21 November and announced that Israel, France and Britain were about to launch an aggressive operation against Syria, and that Israel was massing troops for this purpose on the border. He also alleged that British and French units were also participating in the offensive lineup. The ambassador demanded in the name of his government an immediate discussion on the matter in the U.N. Assembly. The Soviet minister for foreign affairs, Shepilov, exploited the opportunity to call on the Assembly to divert its attention from the problem of Hungary to "the true burning issue" — the

struggle for peace and the problems deriving from the aggression of France, Britain and Israel against Egypt (GAOR, 11th session, Plenary Meeting, 21 November 1956, pp. 257–268).

4. See no. 138.

134. A. Eban (New York) to W. Eytan. 22 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA193; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban presented Hammarskjöld with Israel's answers to his four questions,[1] and emphasised that there were two alternative methods of implementing the troop withdrawal:

A) The risky alternative was to have a U.N. force replace the armies of Israel, Britain and France, and then Nasser would throw out the U.N. force and return to Gaza, Sinai, the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba.

B) The second alternative was that vital matters be determined so as to ensure stability. Nasser should be prevented from returning to Gaza and Sinai, and it should be guaranteed that he would not impose a blockade in the Gulf after it had been opened for weeks. The importance of the Gulf has emerged in light of the blocking of the Suez Canal for many months and the demonstration of its great vulnerability. The U.N. force must guarantee that the Canal would be open to all countries, including Israel. Only thus will the foundation be laid for stability and perhaps also for peace.

In reply, the secretary-general said the following:

A) He agreed that that this opportunity must not be missed and that there should be no reversion to an unsound status quo. The issue of the Gulf is the easiest one, as the U.N. will prevent a renewal of the blockade.

B) Regarding Sinai, he stated that the idea of demilitarisation was attractive, but there was a legal difficulty in preventing Egypt's entry into territory that is Egyptian from a legal standpoint. It was desirable that the U.N. force be deployed in the main centers in Sinai, so that the Egyptian army would be unable to maintain efficient transport lines on the peninsula. In a little while perhaps it would be possible to speak of a demilitarisation agreement, but the idea of creating a vacuum is inconceivable, as some force must be stationed there.

C) As for Gaza, he asked that Israel not be in a hurry to leave Gaza, and not create any sudden vacuum. Eban replied that Israel has not yet finalised its position on the refugees, but there is no need to fear any unexpected departure.

D) He claimed that the *New York Times* wrote erroneously that he accepts Nasser's conditions for the U.N. force. This has generated gratuitous complications between him and the West, including the United States.

Note

1. See no. 129

135. A. Eban (New York) to the United States Division. 22 November 1956

Coded Tel. NTWA 195; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

The foreign minister and Eban spoke with Lodge. They explained Israel's position concerning Gaza, the Gulf of Aqaba, the Canal and Sinai. Lodge remarked that he had received no instructions on these issues. The United States supports the principles of a cease-fire and troop withdrawal, but he does not know what its position is on the question of how to implement the withdrawal in coordination with the U.N. force.

Meir and Eban maintained that unless the United States began to wield its influence, Hammarskjöld would be swayed in an undesirable direction due to Asian-Soviet pressure. Lodge replied that once he knew what the Administration's policy was regarding the problems raised by the foreign minister he would explain it to Hammarskjöld, but at the moment he did not know.

136. G. Meir and A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 22 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWT196; Inc.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Meir and Eban argue that the United States is not participating in the overall Western effort to find a stable solution to the problems of Sinai, the Gulf of Aqaba, the Suez Canal and Gaza, which are being handled by Hammarskjöld. Nor has the United States given its U.N. delegation any instructions on the matter.[1] Obviously, unless

Eisenhower takes an interest in these problems, there is no chance of crystallising a clear policy. An effort should be made to speak with him.

A number of foreign ministers have succeeded in meeting with Eisenhower thanks only to the fact that they came with a personal message from their premiers. Meir and Eban propose informing the State Department that the foreign minister has a personal message she would like to deliver to the president, together with oral explanations. They suggest the following statement in the name of Ben-Gurion: "The Israel government will carry out the commitment it took upon itself on 8 November. However, the manner in which the commitment is carried out will determine whether the outcome will be relative stability or the danger of a renewed conflagration. There is a way of implementing the matter in accordance with the U.N. resolution so that Nasser will not be able to repeat his blockades and instigate renewed Fedaiyun operations and hostile acts with the assistance of the Soviet Union from bases in Sinai and Gaza. I request that you grant the foreign minister an audience in order to receive an explanation on this vital and decisive issue." They ask for Ben-Gurion's approval for this move.[2]

Notes

1. See no. 135.
2. Ben-Gurion authorised the foreign minister and Eban to try to arrange a meeting with Eisenhower (see Ben-Gurion to Meir and Eban, TNWA 709, 27 November 1956, 130.02/2459/1). They began to put out feelers, but quickly discovered that the president had refused to meet with Eden and Mollet, and thus there was no chance that he would agree to invite the Israeli foreign minister (see *The Political Battle*, p. 86).

137. A. Eban (New York) to the United States Division. 22 November 1956

Coded Tel. XA987; Outg.: 93.01/2219/13

Summary

Eban reports on intensive contacts between members of the Israel U.N. delegation and Administration officials, European foreign ministers and journalists in an effort to induce the United States to adopt a more positive and consistent policy.

The following conclusions have emerged in the wake of this effort:

1) The only serious activity by the Americans was with regard to the threat posed by the Soviet volunteers. The impression now is that the Soviet Union and especially the Arabs will hesitate to provoke the United States through overt Soviet military activity in the Middle East.

2) On the other hand, to date the United States has shown no willingness to bridge the gap between itself and Europe. The Americans continue to stress the need to renew the alliance and restore relations with Israel to their former state, but first Britain, France and Israel must carry out their commitments to evacuate their forces. The main pressure is being exerted on Britain, on the assumption that if it gives in, France and Israel will not be able to hold their ground and will soon withdraw.
3) Regarding Israel's demands — Murphy expressed interest in the demilitarisation of Sinai and promised that under no circumstances would the blockade in the Gulf be renewed. Clay maintained that the United States would oppose the return of Egypt to Gaza. On the other hand, the Americans do not believe that Israel in particular needs to remain at the Straits. As for Gaza, they hint that if Israel were to clarify its intentions regarding the refugees, they would define their position concerning the proposition of annexing Gaza to Israel.
4) The president reiterates that the U.N. should handle the crisis and the United States will support it. Israeli officials explained that if the United States does not adopt an unequivocally pro-Western position in the U.N., the U.N.'s decisions are likely to be undesirable even to the United States and to reflect the Soviet-Asian policy in the Middle East.
5) The United States continues to champion the urgent need to arrange a permanent settlement, but no one knows how and when it will submit its proposal on the subject to the new peace committee.[3]
6) The press, the radio and public opinion display understanding towards Israel's position concerning the need to end the state of hostilities between it and Egypt, and to lay the foundations for a more stable arrangement.
7) Although the process of unfreezing the American position has turned out to be far slower and more arduous than expected, in the face of united pressure from Israel, Britain and Europe, it would seem to be worth trying to gain time until the effort bears fruit.

Notes

1. Robert Anderson, see no. 21, note 2.
2. Arthur Dean, a Washington lawyer, Dulles' former partner.
3. For the renewed American proposal to eliminate the Conciliation Commission for Palestine and set up a committee of five in its place, see Editorial Note no. 45.
4. See no. 138.

138. A. Eban (New York) to the United States Division. 22 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA194; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

In a visit he paid to the foreign minister, Clay defined the Administration's policy as follows:

1) The United States feels a deep moral responsibility to ensure the existence and independence of the State of Israel. Nevertheless, a Soviet conquest of the Arab world would bring destruction on both the interests of the West and on Israel, and therefore the U.S. government must be careful not to lose its influence and status in the Arab world that has not yet been subjugated to Nasser.
2) The Administration considers Nasser to be exceptionally pernicious and seeks his downfall, but the path adopted by France and Britain was mistaken. Admittedly, if the British had hastened to conclude their part in the fighting the situation would have been different, but the British military debacle is an extremely serious matter. On the other hand, Israel's military success was impressive, despite the differences of opinion concerning the wisdom of the offensive itself.
3) Obviously the former shaky state of affairs must not be restored, but an effort made to expedite a permanent settlement.
4) At this stage the main aim is to prevent Soviet penetration of the Middle East. The United States has taken vigorous action through various means, diplomatic, public and other, in order to warn the Soviet Union against intervention. Clay believes that the Soviets now understand that intervention in the region would lead to war.
5) The United States will restore its close relations with Britain, France and Israel, but it is also vital that in doing so, it does not abandon the Arab-Muslim world to the Soviets.
6) No harm will be done if the Canal remains closed for a certain period of time. Europe will learn that it is possible to live without the Canal, and the Arabs, including Nasser, will sustain financial damage significant enough to impress upon them that the dependence between the West and the Arab world is mutual, not one-sided.

139. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 22 November 1956

Uncoded Circular Tel. 428; Outg.: 130.09/2377/4

Summary

The Foreign Ministry informs the missions that Eytan denies Syrian reports of concentrations of Israeli troops on the Syrian border.[1] He has announced that an arrangement has been made with the chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organisation in Palestine for U.N. observers to visit the area and see for themselves that there is no truth in the Syrian claims.[2] At the same time Israel requested that the chief of staff send a similar group of observers to the Syrian side of the border.

Notes

1. See no. 137, note 3.
2. On 23 November a group of observers did indeed tour the border in order to refute the Syrian claims. The observers traveled from Dan to Ein Gev and Tel Katzir and found nothing, and reported accordingly to the U.N. headquarters in Jerusalem. Leary, the acting chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organisation after the previous chief of staff, Burns, had been appointed to command UNEF in November 1956, sent the report to Hammarskjöld, and it was published by the latter in New York (see Tekoah to the Israel permanent mission to the U.N., TNW 706, 23 November 1956, 130.09/2339/7. See also Hammarskjöld's press release, 23 November 1956, 130.02/2448/7).

140. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to J. Tsur (Paris). 22 November 1956

Coded Tel. 991; Outg.: 130.02/2459/4

Summary

Bartur spoke with the French ambassador to Israel, Gilbert, who was enthusiastic about the oil pipeline and advocated organised French-Israeli economic cooperation in order to carry out all the economic programmes, including the pipeline. He also suggested a joint plan for the provision of fuel to Israel, for instance by examining the possibility of receiving first priority in building fuel tankers in French shipyards. He will send a cable immediately, directly to Mollet, and will recommend appointing someone to take charge of coordinating the activities. He advises Tsur

too to approach Mollet immediately. Bartur asks Tsur to take action to promote the pipeline and to raise the subject of the tankers.[1]

Note

1. At the same time as these contacts with France, Israel decided on 22 November to lay a temporary pipe, 8 inches in diameter and 200 kilometres in length, from Eilat to Beer Sheba (see no. 148). The oil was destined for local consumption. Nevertheless the possibility of starting to build a pipeline with a larger diameter which would enable Israel also to export oil to France was not ruled out (see Bartur to Galli, Tel. 890, 23 November 1956, 130.02/2459/4).

141. M. Fischer (Ankara) to W. Eytan. 23 November 1956

Coded Tel. 572; Inc.: 130.09/2289/13

Summary

After hearing that Radio Pakistan had broadcast a report that Turkey had decided to sever diplomatic relations with Israel, Fischer telephoned Birgi, who told him that the topic had been raised for discussion at the Baghdad Conference,[1] but had not yet been decided. He claimed that there was no question of breaking off diplomatic relations, but that the serious situation in the region requires rethinking Turkey's relations with all of the states in it.[2] Birgi promised that he would inform Fischer immediately of the decision.

Fischer contacted the U.S. ambassador in Turkey, informed him of developments and demanded his immediate intervention with Prime Minister Adnan Menderes. The ambassador refused, explaining that Israel should understand that, following the failure of the French-British military operation, Turkey would not support the losing side. He added that U.S.-Turkish relations were dearer to him than those between Turkey and Israel.[3]

Ultimately the ambassador promised that he would see Menderes as soon as possible and ask his permission to convey Turkey's intentions to Fischer, given that the matter could have an impact on regional peace. He would also forward the information to Washington.

Notes

1. The prime ministers of Iran, Pakistan, Iraq and Turkey and the president of Pakistan assembled in Baghdad on 19 November to discuss developments in the Middle East crisis.

2. In a cable to the Foreign Ministry Fischer explained the background to Turkey's decision: "There was no intention to do so at the expense of relations with Israel, and in fact they were successful in that at the Teheran conference [see no. 106, note 2]. But immediately afterwards Nuri Said was about to fall victim to the fanaticism of public opinion, and in Pakistan as well pressure intensified on its pro-Western leader, Iskander Mirzah. The Turks answered the call to support Nuri Said, and in Baghdad they realised that they could not save the Baghdad Pact and the status of the leaders of the anti-Soviet forces in the Muslim world and gain the support of the anti-Soviet Lebanese and Saudi regimes without making a sacrifice to global Islamic public opinion" (see Tel. 581, 25 November 1956, 130.02/2459/4).
3. The Foreign Ministry immediately took steps designed to change the U.S. position on the subject of Turkish-Israeli relations. See, for instance, Eytan's cable to Eban: "It is absolutely vital that the Americans make it perfectly clear to the Turks that they would take a very dim view not only of the severance of relations with Israel (something I cannot imagine), but even of a demonstrative act such as recalling ministers. In light of Menderes' and Birgi's visit to London I suggest that you activate Lloyd and Pineau as well. I have mobilised Elath and Tsur" (see Tel. 715, 25 November 1956, 130.09/2312/9). See also nos. 150 and 151.

142. Editorial Note

The U.N. General Assembly Resolution on the Withdrawal of Israeli, British and French Forces (24 November 1956)

The 11th session of the U.N. General Assembly convened on 12 November, and within a few days the Middle East crisis was placed on the agenda, after having already been discussed in the Emergency Session of the General Assembly. On 21 November the U.N. secretary-general submitted the amended reports (see no. 127, note 4) on the U.N. Emergency Force (whose units were starting to arrive in Egypt) and its mission, on preparations for clearing the Suez Canal and on the degree of implementation of prior resolutions concerning troop withdrawals from the Canal and Sinai. These reports served as a basis for the Assembly deliberations on 23 November.

Two resolutions were introduced for the Assembly's consideration. The first, sponsored by the Afro-Asian bloc, expressed "serious concern" over the failure to implement the resolutions on withdrawal that were adopted on 2 and 7 November. It reiterated the call to Israel, Britain and France to withdraw without delay, and instructed Hammarskjöld to report back immediately to the Assembly regarding implementation.

The second resolution, sponsored by Canada, Colombia, India, Norway, the United States and Yugoslavia ("the resolution of the six") instructed the secretary-general to continue deploying and operating the U.N. Emergency Force and to continue clearing the Canal.

Prior to the vote the Belgian foreign minister, Spaak, proposed introducing far-reaching amendments into the Afro-Asian resolution: to include a reference to the fact that Israel, Britain and France had already evacuated a portion of their troops from Egypt and Sinai and to insist on strict implementation of the Assembly resolutions of 2 and 7 November. Spaak's initiative reflected the opinion of the Western European states, who, while they did not establish their own bloc, had their reservations both about the one-sided stance of the Afro-Asian bloc and about the alienated position of the United States. The proposal, however, was defeated, as only 23 countries supported it while 33 were opposed and 18 abstained. In effect there was no chance that the Belgian amendment would be adopted since the Afro-Asian-Soviet group controlled more than a third of the votes required to defeat any resolution opposing it (see Kidron to Herzog, X 19, 26 November 1956, 130.09/2333/3). The rift between the United States, Britain and France was again apparent in this resolution, as the United States abstained. Its representative, Lodge, had stated previously in the Assembly that the evacuation of Port Said should not be delayed until the Suez Canal was completely cleared, emphasising the need to accelerate the pace of the withdrawal.

Ultimately the Afro-Asian resolution (after it had been moderated by a number of minor amendments) and the resolution of the six were adopted by a large majority of 63 in favour, 5 against and 10 abstentions. For the third time the U.N. General Assembly called on Israel, Britain and France to withdraw from the Suez Canal and Sinai without delay.

The wording of the first Assembly resolution is as follows:

GAOR, Resolution 1120 (XI) 24.11.1956

The General Assembly:

Having received the report of the Secretary-General on compliance with General Assembly resolutions 997(ES–1) and 1002(ES–1) of 2 and 7 November 1956.

Recalling further that its resolution 1002 (ES–1) called upon Israel immediately to withdraw its forces behind the demarcation line established by the General Armistice Agreement between Egypt and Israel of 24 February 1949,

Recalling further that the above-mentioned resolution also called upon France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland immediately to withdraw their forces from Egyptian territory, in conformity with previous resolutions,

1. *Notes with regret* that, according to the communications received by the Secretary-General, two-thirds of the French forces remain, all of the United Kingdom forces remain although it has been announced that arrangements are being made for the withdrawal of one battalion, and no Israel forces have been withdrawn behind the Armistice line although a considerable time has elapsed since the adoption of the relevant General Assembly resolutions [despite Israel's

declaration to the secretary-general that it had withdrawn some forces from Sinai behind the border, see no. 122, no. 143];

2. *Reiterates* its call to France, Israel and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to comply forthwith with resolutions 997 (ES–1) and 1002 (ES–1) of 2 and 7 November 1956;
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General urgently to communicate the present resolution to the parties concerned, and to report without delay to the General Assembly of the implementation thereof.

143. A. Eban (New York) to the U.N. Secretary-General (New York). 24 November 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/3

Notes

1. See no. 129.
2. In anticipation of the vote on the Afro-Asian resolution. See Editorial Note no. 142.

144. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 25 November 1956

Coded Tel. TNW714; Outg.: 130.02/2459/4

Summary

Eytan gives the members of the Israel mission to the U.N. the following instructions in the name of the prime minister:

A) In the wake of the Assembly resolution[1] there is a pressing need to explain to the United States that Israel will not be able to leave the Gulf of Aqaba lest this prompt a reimposition of the naval blockade there. Once the Canal has been blocked, a step which could be repeated even after the evacuation, the existence of an unobstructed alternative route in the Gulf of Aqaba is imperative not only for Israel but also for the free world. He also asks them to announce that Israel is about to lay an oil pipeline from Eilat to Beer Sheba.
B) They must strongly denounce the Syrian libel concerning the massing of Israeli troops on the border, which was denied by Hammarskjöld himself,[2] and reprimand the Afro-Asian bloc for lending a hand to this lie without investigating.

C) A demand must be raised to implement the Assembly's resolution of 2 November concerning freedom of navigation.[3] The secretary-general should be asked what he has done and what the Assembly is going to do to counter Nasser's arbitrary behaviour, which damages European, Asian and African states.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 142.
2. See no. 139, note 2.
3. See Editorial Note no. 11.

145. A. Eban (New York) to W. Eytan. 25 November 1956

Coded Tel. WIA6; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Eban argues that once the Israel government had committed itself on 8 November to evacuating all Egyptian territory, it is doubtful whether anyone is going to release it from that commitment. There is a chance that a U.N. force will be deployed there in place of the Israeli force. Israel enjoys a good deal of support for its demand that the Gulf must remain an international waterway, but no one supports the proposition that this can only be guaranteed by leaving Israeli troops there. The tendency is to station a U.N. force there until there is a final settlement; the very fact of the force's presence will ensure that navigation proceeds unhindered.

Eban recommends that in the negotiations with Hammarskjöld Israel propose the following:

1) A continued presence in the Gulf of Aqaba with U.N. consent.
2) If this is not possible, Israel will evacuate its troops only in exchange for a guarantee that a U.N. force will be stationed there and will guarantee freedom of navigation for all nations.

Eban believes that only the second alternative has a chance, and regards it as an achievement for Israel.

Note

1. See no. 144.

146. G. Meir (New York) to the U.N. Secretary-General (New York). 26 November 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/3

Notes

1. See no. 80.
2. See no. 129.

147. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to G. Meir (New York). 26 November 1956

Orig.: 93.03/3064/3

Notes

1. No. 146.
2. No. 80.
3. No. 94.

148. L. Eshkol (Jerusalem) to A. Eban and M. Sherman (New York). 26 November 1956

Coded Tel. 991; Outg.: 130.09/2332/2

Summary

Eshkol announces that Israel is planning to build an eight-inch pipeline to transport some 700,000 tons of fuel from Eilat to Beer Sheba, and from there by train to Haifa. The pipeline can be laid in four months. The plan does not preclude preparations for constructing a larger pipeline when the time comes.

Steps should be taken to ensure that the State Department will assist or at least not hinder efforts to obtain a long-term contract for the purchase of oil from Iran, whether directly or via France. Obviously this underscores the necessity for freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba.

Eshkol asks their opinion concerning the plan.[1]

Note

1. Sherman sent the following reply to Eshkol's telegram:
   "1) In accordance with Eytan's telegram no. 714 of November 25 [no. 144], we have already informed the State Department about the Eilat-Beer Sheba pipeline, but we did not request their assistance. Tomorrow I will meet with Eban and Shiloah, and will cable you. In the meantime I have asked Kosloff for further details.
   2) In view of developments with Turkey, I fear difficulties with Iran, which is a member of the Baghdad Pact. I therefore suggest approaching Iran through Lazard Frères [the Lazard Bank] in America, as they are currently active in Iran through a subsidiary headed by David Lilienthal. I met with the head of the company, André Mayer, and he seemed to be in favour.
   3) In my opinion, for psychological reasons, we should now state our readiness to allow an emergency pipeline or pipelines to be laid to the Mediterranean Sea, in order to enable the transport of larger amounts [of fuel] to Europe. Naturally we would not bear the expense of constructing such a pipeline" (see Sherman to Eshkol, Tel. 33, 27 November 1956, 130.09/2333/3).

149. Israel Ambassador in Moscow to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 26 November 1956

Coded Tel. 756; Inc.: 130.09/2326/8

Summary

Ambassador Avidar opposes any public initiative on the part of U.S. Jewry to accuse the Soviet Union of encouraging an antisemitic atmosphere or antisemitic acts, expulsion etc., arguing that it would only cause harm. He gives the following reasons:

1) Reports from various sources contradict the rumours on the above. The isolated cases where Jews were injured stemmed from local developments.
2) The weapon of a public campaign should be kept in reserve in case genuine antisemitic acts do erupt.
3) Now that the focus of Soviet radio and the press has shifted from the Middle East to other topics, the Jews feel some relief, and it would be preferable to help calm things down by refraining from public activity.

Note

1. This telegram (the East European division to the Israel ambassador in Moscow, Tel. 466, 25 November 1956, 130.09/2326/6) gives the gist of the cable from Harman and Rivlin to Eshel cited in no. 132 above.

150. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 26 November 1956

Coded Circular Tel. 450; Outg.: 130.09/2377/4

Summary

Istinyeli, the Turkish minister to Israel, has informed Eytan that he has been recalled to Ankara. The Turkish government has been compelled to take this step in order to bolster the Baghdad Pact.[1] He was asked to emphasize that this step is not directed against Israel but is designed to preserve the peace, which is the sole objective of his government. The Turkish government itself has only the best of intentions towards Israel, and there will be no other changes in diplomatic and commercial relations. The Turkish legation in Israel will remain as before, and someone will be appointed as chargé d'affaires.

Eytan expressed his surprise over the fact that Turkey was following in the footsteps of the U.S.S.R. of all countries. Istinyeli replied that the measure was intended to save the Middle East from the Soviet threat.[2]

Note

1. The Baghdad Pact had caused difficulties between Israel and Turkey from the time it was signed on 24 February 1955. Israel deplored the exchange of letters between the prime ministers of Turkey and Iraq which was appended to the text of the Pact. According to this exchange, the two states undertook to implement all the U.N. resolutions concerning Palestine (see Vol. 13, Introduction, p. xlv).

151. M. Fischer (Ankara) to W. Eytan. 26 November 1956

Coded Tel. 548; Inc.: 130.09/2289/13

Summary

After the announcement concerning the downgrading of Turkey's relations with Israel, Fischer met with Esenbel, the deputy secretary-general of the Turkish Foreign Ministry. Fischer asked whether the issue would affect the economic ties between the two countries, but failed to receive a clear answer. It was hinted that the matter would be decided in the future according to circumstances. Esenbel assumed that ongoing commitments, such as the air traffic agreement, would remain in force.

Since the Turkish announcement stated that the ministers of both countries would be recalled, Fischer inquired about his own status. Esenbel replied that the matter had not been discussed, but that his government expects the Israel government to recall him as well. Fischer explained that he would not leave without instructions to that effect from Israel, so long as he was not expelled.

Fischer subsequently met with the U.S. ambassador, Warren Fletcher, and asked him to inform Menderes, whom he was due to meet in the near future, that it was in the U.S. interest that the volume of trade between Israel and Turkey not be reduced. The ambassador promised that he would try to raise the issue with Menderes, and that he would ask for instructions from Washington.

Notes

1. See no. 150.
2. Eytan instructed Fischer to remain in place since he was to conclude his service in Ankara at the end of December in any case (see Eytan to the Israel legation in Ankara, Tel. 551, 28 November 1956, 130.09/2289/12).
3. After his conversation with Menderes, the U.S. ambassador told Fischer the following:
   1) There would be no changes in the economic and commercial ties between Israel and Turkey;
   2) Despite the minister's recall, the legations in Tel Aviv and Ankara would continue to operate as before;
   3) There had been no change in Turkey's attitude towards and esteem for Israel. The ambassador suggests that the Israel government recall Fischer from Turkey in order not to jeopardise what they have managed to salvage to date — ongoing commercial ties, the continued functioning of the legations and Turkey's friendly approach to Israel (see Fischer to Eytan, Tel. 593, 29 November 1956, 130.02/2459/4).

152. Y. Ilsar (Jerusalem) to Y. Aviad (Berne). 26 November 1956

Copy: 130.10/2519/12

Summary

Ilsar relates that he has received reports from various sources that the Egyptian authorities have ordered some 15,000 stateless Jews to leave Egypt. Otherwise they will be jailed in concentration camps in the desert. At Shragai's[1] suggestion, the Israel embassies in Washington and Rome have been mobilised to help.

Meroz spoke with Bergus of the State Department about the matter, who said that they had heard similar reports. While in their opinion the rumours are baseless,

the U.S. is aware of the situation and is doing all it can to foil such plans. The State Department was also approached separately by Nahum Goldmann and the American Jewish Committee.

In Rome Sasson spoke with Rossi Longhi, the secretary-general of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who cabled the Italian ambassador in Cairo in his presence and instructed him to ascertain urgently whether the reports are correct. Rossi Longhi also directed the embassy in Cairo to assist Italian Jews wishing to leave in receiving an exit permit, and to check whether the Egyptian authorities are willing to permit the departure of the stateless Jews.

Rossi Longhi stated that it would be possible to get the Italian government to agree to grant 4,000–5,000 Jews temporary visas for Italy, on condition that the Israeli government commit itself to absorbing them and defraying their expenses, and if the Israeli government can point to another European country willing to do the same.[2] He also advised them to interest the Vatican in the fate of the stateless Jews residing in Egypt, from a humanitarian standpoint.

Notes

1. Shlomo Zalman Shragai, head of the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency.
2. Representatives of the World Jewish Congress and the Committee of the Association of Jewish Communities in Rome also approached the Italian Foreign Ministry with the request that the government assist the thousands of Egyptian Jews threatened with expulsion or imprisonment.
   The Italian Foreign Ministry looked favourably on the request, while stipulating a number of conditions similar to those presented to Sasson (see Sasson to Eytan, Tel. 821, 26 November 1956, 130.09/2357/6).

153. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 26 November 1956

Coded Tel. 723; Outg.: 130.09/2339/7

Summary

Eytan informs the mission that the prime minister wants to raise the plight of Egyptian Jewry vigorously in the U.N. Despite the soothing words from the State Department, disturbing reports continue to stream in, and in the meantime the first of the refugees have reached France and Italy. The mission should act once they receive the details from the Foreign Ministry, to be sent within 24 hours.[1]

Note

1. At the same time Kidron reported that even before receiving this directive he had met with Hammarskjöld, informed him of the details known to Israel about the expulsion of Jews from Egypt, which caused grave concern, and asked whether he had any further information on the subject. Hammarskjöld replied that he had spoken with Egyptian Foreign Minister Fawzi, and that the latter claimed that there was no problem with the Jews, and that the steps taken were against British and French citizens. Kidron refuted this assertion and pressed the secretary-general to obtain further information from his staff in Egypt regarding events there (see Kidron to Herzog, Tel. 20, 26 November 1956, 130.09/2333/3).

154. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 27 November 1956

Coded Tel. 734; Outg.: 130.09/2312/9

Summary

The United States division relates that following a meeting between Javits and Ben-Gurion, Javits cabled the White House that the prime minister greatly appreciated the paragraph in the president's letter about relations with Israel,[3] and that he respects and admires the president's personality and his aspirations for peace. Israel views Nasser's restoration to his former status as an encouragement to Soviet penetration of Africa and Asia, and it does not understand U.S. intentions. On the other hand, Javits believes that Washington does not take Ben-Gurion's fears seriously enough. He is certain of the latter's sincerity regarding the withdrawal, but care should be taken not to drive Israel to despair. In the wake of his conversation with the prime minister and his trip to Sinai and Gaza, Javits has a number of suggestions that could, in his opinion, help resolve misunderstandings and restore full mutual trust between the United States and Israel. He would like to brief the president on this personally.

At Lawson's suggestion, Javits stressed in his cable the urgent need for thorough treatment of the situation.

Notes

1. The telegram was not found.
2. President Eisenhower's letter to Ben-Gurion.
3. This paragraph reads as follows: "May I once again affirm the bonds of sympathetic interest between our countries and voice the confidence that the present difficulties

may be resolved in a peaceful manner" (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 25 November 1956).

4. At the meeting between Javits and Ben-Gurion on 26 November a number of topics were discussed: the danger of Nasser's recovery, the disdain shown by the U.N. Assembly for resolutions that could be interpreted in Israel's favour — such as paragraph 4 in the 2 November resolution on freedom of navigation — and the importance of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba not only for Israel but for the entire world, as an alternative to the Suez Canal (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 26 November 1956).

155. United States Division (Jerusalem) to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (Washington). 27 November 1956

Coded Tel. 734; Outg.: 130.09/2312/9

Summary

In a conversation with Herzog, Lawson stated the following:

1) The United States had voted in favour of the Afro-Asian draft resolution[1] in order to score gains in Asia. Nevertheless he does not expect the United States to initiate pressure on Israel for an immediate withdrawal.
2) Now that it has adopted a policy relying on the U.N., the United States cannot deviate from it. There is, however, understanding for Israel's position, and the question is how to translate this understanding into action without detracting from the gains made in Asia. He is continually insisting that the State Department takes Israel into consideration.
3) The impression received by the State Department is that Hammarskjöld did not effectively address problems in general in Cairo. Hammarskjöld claims that first of all it was vital to ensure a foothold for the U.N. force in Egypt.
4) Under tremendous pressure from Pakistan and Iraq, the Turks announced that recalling their minister from Israel was the maximum they were willing to do to help save Nuri al-Said.[3] Lawson suggests not blowing it out of proportion.
5) Syria is receiving such great quantities of Soviet arms that it does not know what to do with them.
6) The Beirut summit[4] was extremely turbulent, and the Syrians left disappointed because the Lebanese, the Iraqis and the Jordanians rejected their demand to adopt an aggressively anti-British stance.
7) From the outset the United States never believed that the Soviet threat was genuine, but nevertheless it took precautions against all possibilities. The president sent the Soviets a message that was extraordinary in its severity. The United States doubts that under present conditions the U.S.S.R. will intervene,

but worries that in the event of a conflagration between Israel, Jordan and Syria, the Soviets would be likely to send Syria numerous volunteers.

8) While admittedly there is reason to fear that the State Department will again be tempted to support Nasser, he surmises that past experience will nevertheless deter them from doing so.

9) Lawson believes that it is in Israel's most urgent interest to propose a clear-cut plan for the Gaza refugees. Such a plan might include, for instance, partial resettlement in Sinai in accordance with the original U.N. proposal and partial resettlement in Israel with the assistance of the Johnston plan,[5] with the balance of the refugees being absorbed elsewhere.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 142.
2. See no. 134.
3. See no. 141, note 2.
4. A conference of the heads of state of Arab countries convened in Beirut (13–15 November) at the initiative of the Lebanese president to discuss the attack on Egypt and Soviet penetration of the Middle East via Syria. The conference concluded without any result due to differences of opinion among the participants regarding their position toward the U.S.S.R. and Syria's demand to break off relations with Britain and France.
5. A plan to divide the waters of the Jordan River between Israel, Jordan and Syria and to use the water for regional development. The plan was discussed during 1953–1955 with the mediation of Eric Johnston, Eisenhower's personal envoy to the Middle East for water planning (see Vol. 9, no. 17, note 2). Ultimately the talks between the sides came to nothing.

156. G. Meir (New York) to the President of the U.N. General Assembly. 27 November 1956

Copy: 130.02/2448/7

157. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 November 1956

Coded Tel. 11; Inc.: 130.09/2347/2

Summary

Tsur forwards a summary of reports on Egyptian Jewry that have been received by the embassy, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency.

1) There is no confirmation that an official order of expulsion was issued.
2) The police are putting pressure on hundreds of Jewish families of all nationalities, as well as on French and English non-Jews. They are arresting heads of families and putting them in prison camps. The latter are released only on condition that they promise to leave Egypt for good.
3) Some are leaving ostensibly of their own free will, frightened by the rumours of possible expulsion. In order to receive an exit permit they have signed a commitment not to return.
4) Three concentration camps have been opened in Cairo. According to testimony, one of them holds 500 people, another about 200.
5) Jewish-owned factories and businesses have been expropriated and placed in the hands of a custodian. Commercial firms are being checked, and pressure is being applied to remove Jews from management positions. Most of the Jews who were arrested were rich, and the government exploited the opportunity to confiscate their assets.
6) Most of the departing Jews are required to give up their right to reside in Egypt, to commit themselves never to return even as tourists and to waive any financial claims.
7) A picture is emerging of total anarchy from the standpoint of both the law and the police. Any foreigner and any Jew is fair game, and the initiative is in the hands of the police.
8) A new citizenship law has been promulgated, to take effect upon its publication in the official gazette, whereby the status of those who acquired Egyptian

citizenship after 1939 will be reexamined. Moreover, the authorities are entitled to revoke the citizenship of any "Zionist."

9) The French government lacks precise figures regarding the number of refugees who have reached France. Over 150 French citizens are estimated to have arrived, along with stateless persons and foreign nationals. In Marseilles authorities await a ship with 650 returnees, including a number of Jews, and in Brindisi a boat carrying 120 Jews is expected.
10) The embassy has informed Jewish institutions in France that they should exert their influence, making strong protests in the press and to the embassies of the United States, Yugoslavia and India. The chief rabbi and the chairman of CRIF (Conseil Representatif des Institutions Juifs de France — the representative organisation of French Jewish communities) are issuing a statement to the press.

158. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 28 November 1956

Coded Tel. NTWA202; Inc.: 130.09/2451/4

Summary

Eban reports that a European bloc has begun to form at the General Assembly session, which works in unison. This bloc is still weak in comparison to the Soviet and Afro-Asian blocs when they operate jointly, but the very existence of an organised European initiative constitutes an important factor, and Israel should act to promote it.

Lodge reiterated in his speech that the United States supports a troop withdrawal in coordination with the entry of the U.N. force, and that Egypt is not entitled to dictate the force's manner of operation. On the other hand, the United States did not give expression to this position in its vote, to the annoyance of its Western allies.

Once again, the huge numerical advantage wielded by the Arabs and their supporters is evident in every vote in the Assembly with its existing composition. However, there are clear signs of progress both with regard to the United States and with regard to Hammarskjöld. The outcome of the campaign will largely depend on the negotiations with Hammarskjöld concerning Gaza, the Gulf of Aqaba, the Suez Canal and Sinai. His position is influenced by that of the United States and vice versa. A turning point is possible. The Israeli argument is beginning to penetrate and to have an impact, and the chances of a favourable result in these contacts are greater than the chances of extracting any kind of success from the Assembly plenum.

Notes

1. In this telegram Herzog conveys to the U.N. delegation the prime minister's request that the foreign minister and the delegation assess the last session of Assembly deliberations, with regard to the degree of understanding for Israel's demands concerning Gaza, the Gulf of Aqaba, the demilitarisation of Sinai and freedom of navigation. He also asked them to relate specifically to the American position regarding the withdrawal and to British and French plans (see Herzog to the Israel permanent mission to the U.N. and the foreign minister, Coded Tel. 2, 27 November 1956, 130.02/2405/1. See also Editorial Note no. 142).
2. See Editorial Note, *ibid.*
3. See no. 159.
4. See the United States division to Eban and Shiloah, Tel. 735, 27 November 1956, 130.09/2312/9.

159. A. Eban (Washington) to the Prime Minister. 28 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA203; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban describes a conversation he had with Hammarskjöld,[1] together with Kidron, Rafael, Bunche and Stavropoulos.

In keeping with the foreign minister's instructions, Eban explained Israel's position to Hammarskjöld as follows: the troop withdrawal from Egypt should take place together with the planned deployment of the U.N. force, as Lodge had said. Following the withdrawal, stability would be achieved only if Egyptian forces did not return to the Gulf of Aqaba, Sinai and the Gaza Strip.

Eban asked Hammarskjöld if he could suggest an arrangement that would guarantee that under no circumstances would the blockade in the Gulf be renewed. The secretary-general replied that it was U.N. policy to support freedom of navigation in both the Suez Canal and the Gulf, but that he lacked the power to guarantee that at this stage. He therefore suggests deferring the evacuation of Israeli troops from the Gulf until the last stage of the withdrawal.

As for Gaza, Eban proposed that the current de facto state of affairs continue on the basis of mutual consent. He told Hammarskjöld that he had passed on the latter's warning against creating a sudden vacuum to the Israeli government. The secretary-general stated that Israel should remain in Gaza until the time came for a thorough examination of the issue. Accordingly it was very important that Israel refrain from making public declarations that would oblige him to respond, treat the residents of Gaza humanely and not quarrel with U.N. officials there.

As for Sinai, Eban noted that Israel seeks to prevent any renewal of the Egyptian base there and favours demilitarisation. He asked the secretary-general if he could guarantee that the Israeli army would be replaced by a U.N. force and not the Egyptian army. Hammarskjöld replied that the U.N. force could be stationed in several locations that controlled the transportation and communications systems in Sinai, and that a rule had been established that no other army may enter a site where a U.N. force is deployed. Thus, without detracting from Egypt's legal rights in the area, the very fact that the U.N. force is there will prevent the return of the Egyptian army.

As for the question of the duration of the U.N. force's mandate in Sinai, the secretary-general stated that the matter had deliberately been left vague. After the passage of a certain amount of time they would look for a stable solution with U.S. assistance.

Hammarskjöld argued that the main thing at this point was to clear the Canal and expedite the evacuation of Port Said. He asked Israel to inform him promptly of its willingness to move away troops currently stationed near the Canal. He did not mention any specific distance. He explained that so long as Israeli soldiers are in the area of the Canal the British exploit this as proof that there is still a military threat and that they must remain. Israel is liable to serve as a pretext for not clearing the Canal, thereby provoking the wrath of all of Western Europe.

At the end of the discussion the participants agreed on the following:

1) The content of the conversation would not be publicised. Instead, a general statement would be issued to the effect that it has been decided to deploy the U.N. force and that the Israeli army will withdraw.
2) For the time being the secretary-general will inform the Advisory Committee only of the fact that he was in discussion with Israel. The additional plans for the U.N. force in Sinai would be announced later.
3) From time to time Israel will announce the evacuation of specific forces from Sinai, and the matter will be publicised in order to calm the Assembly.
4) The discussion regarding the Gulf and Gaza has been deferred to a later stage; in the meantime Israel will be sparing with announcements about its political intentions.

The participants decided that parallel talks will be held with the U.S. delegation.

Notes

1. The report is in file 130.16/2947/12.
2. See no. 147.
3. In his speech of 23 November before the U.N. Assembly.
4. The reference is to the secretary-general's advice in his meeting on 21 November with Eban that Israel avoid a hasty departure from Gaza (see no. 134, item 3).
5. A word is missing in the original.

6. See no. 80.
7. James Barco, counselor to the U.S. delegation to the U.N. Assembly and deputy U.S. representative to the Security Council.

160. A. Eban (New York) to W. Eytan. 28 November 1956

Coded Tel. WNT198; Inc.: 130.09/2338/23

Summary

In a conversation with the foreign minister, Lloyd stated that the factor that had disrupted the Suez operation was the American reaction. Nevertheless, a gradual improvement can be felt both in public opinion and at the State Department. Were it not for the U.N. and the powerful momentum generated by the Assembly, it would be possible to gain the necessary time to reach an understanding with the United States.

Lloyd is willing to back up Israel's arguments regarding the Gulf and the demilitarisation of Sinai, and will say so in his forthcoming statement in Parliament. As for Gaza, he will state that Israel must withdraw its troops from there, but that the U.N. must take responsibility for Gaza, and that under no condition should it be returned to Egypt. He assumes that the idea will be so alarming to Hammarskjöld that the latter will again ask Israel not to leave.[1]

Lloyd expressed satisfaction at the cooperation between the two countries, and noted that he intends to be in constant contact with Ambassador Elath.

It was clear that the British would try to gain at least another two weeks before they begin the actual evacuation, on the assumption that the extra time would promote a rapprochement with the United States, largely due to the State Department's deep concern over the situation in Syria.

Notes

1. See no. 134.
2. See no. 138.

161. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 28 November 1956

Coded Tel. 40; Inc.: 130.09/2333/3

Summary

Kidron sends Herzog a summary of the activity in the U.N. on behalf of Egyptian Jewry.

1) A letter signed by the foreign minister was presented to the president of the General Assembly.[1]
2) Eban gave a speech before the Assembly in which he related all the facts known to Israel, while spelling out Egypt's international commitments. Eban's address will be presented to the president of the Assembly as a memorandum for general distribution.
3) Members of the Israeli delegation spoke with numerous other delegations, asking them to mention the topic during their speeches in the general debate and also to approach Egypt, the president of the Assembly and the secretary-general.
4) The Israeli delegation has approached the secretary-general three times over the last two days. As a result of these contacts and similar ones on the part of the British and French, the secretary-general has met with Fawzi twice. He also requested full information from his personal representative in Cairo. If the forthcoming reports are not satisfactory, he will ask Egypt to agree to the stationing of observers.
5) The Italian delegation has contacted the Israel delegation several times with a request for information. The Italians are worried about the Jews with Italian citizenship and all the Italian citizens in Egypt. They are willing to fly them and the stateless individuals to Italy in the planes taking out the U.N. force and to give them temporary refuge. They ask only that they not be the only ones, and that their assistance not be overly emphasised.[2]
6) The Indian ambassador in Cairo had informed Kidron that he and Krishna Menon[3] had approached Fawzi, and that Nehru had also made an urgent approach to Nasser. In his communication Nehru stressed the condition of the Jews compared with that of the British and French citizens.

Notes

1. No. 156.
2. See also no. 152.
3. Chairman of the Indian delegation to the Eleventh Session of the U.N. General Assembly.

4. On 28 November a debate was also held in the Knesset on the persecution of Egyptian Jewry. Ben-Gurion opened the discussion with an account of the dispossession of the Egyptian Jews, the imprisonment of thousands of them, the expulsion of those without citizenship and in the next stage — the revocation of the citizenship of Jews of Egyptian nationality and their expulsion in a state of utter destitution.
At the conclusion of the debate a vote was taken on a government motion expressing Israel's shock at the atrocities perpetrated against Egyptian Jewry, which represented a violation of human rights as guaranteed by the U.N. Charter.
The Knesset demanded that the U.N. General Assembly and the ambassadors of the Great Powers in Cairo take immediate steps to end the persecution, release the prisoners and halt the discrimination against Egyptian Jewry.
An alternative resolution on the subject, sponsored by Knesset Member Sneh (of the Israel Communist Party), stated that Egyptian Jewry bore no responsibility for the offensive war of Israeli forces on Egyptian territory, and that any harm inflicted on them was both illegal and immoral. Egypt was called upon to cancel the decree of expulsion against the Jews. The government of Israel was called upon "to stop committing atrocities against the Arab residents of the state of Israel [see Editorial Note no. 210 below] and in the territories held by Israeli forces," to cancel the results of the attack on Egypt and to withdraw from the occupied territories. The government resolution was adopted by a majority of 67 votes. Sneh's resolution received only three votes (see *Divrei Haknesset* (Knesset Reports), Vol. XXI, 1956–1957, pp. 359–362).

162. M. Sherman (New York) to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Commerce and Industry. 29 November 1956

Copy: 43/7226/5

Summary

While in Washington on 26 November, Sherman sought to ascertain what the chances were of a renewal of American aid to Israel following the withdrawal. He reached the conclusion that there are three possibilities:

1) A new situation has been created, which demands a new approach and a new economic policy. Until such a policy is formulated, there is no guarantee that economic relations will be restored in their entirety.
2) There will not be a total vacuum, and even while the new economic policy for the Middle East is being drawn up, the United States will continue to provide aid along the lines of the previous policy that was in place before 29 October. There is also a school of thought which believes that there will be an increase in assistance provided to the Middle East, though not immediately.
3) A middle view, presented as speculation, is that economic relations will be renewed *gradually* almost immediately after the political problems are clarified.

In summary, Sherman says that there is no basis for unqualified pessimism, or for the assumption that all aid channels will be blocked for an extended period in order to impose some plan on Israel. On the other hand, it would be premature to expect that aid will be renewed immediately upon the withdrawal.

The thaw will evidently be gradual and will begin with economic assistance, while the loan from the Export-Import Bank and perhaps also agricultural surplus purchases according to Law 480 will be deferred. This is because the latter are less of an ongoing arrangement than financial aid and bear more resemblance to a one-time deal.

At all events, it would be unwise to expect to receive anything before the end of January.

Note

1. A memorandum by Seager, regional director of the Office of European Operations, International Cooperation Administration, written only a few days later (3 December 1956), states that despite the fact that aid to Israel has not been officially halted, every effort should be made to slow its execution until policy guidelines are received from the State Department. The memorandum also states that this information should not be revealed in discussions with representatives of the Israeli embassy (see *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 632, pp. 1236–1238).

163. A. Eban (New York) to W. Eytan. 29 November 1956

Coded Tel. XA45; Outg.: 93.01/2213/5

Summary

Following Shepilov's declaration in Copenhagen[1] and the remarks by Ali Sabri published in the *New York Times*, Eban expresses concern that there is a Soviet-Egyptian-Syrian plan to renew the war.

In view of this assessment, the Israeli delegation has decided to take the following steps:

1) to publish a strong denial of Shepilov's remarks.
2) to increase pressure on the State Department to take political action in the U.N. and outside it, by warning Moscow directly.
3) If the State Department will not promise to act in the U.N., yet shares Israel's assessment regarding the gravity of the situation, Israel will consider demanding an urgent session of the Security Council.
4) Influence the press to publicise the Soviet-Arab plot.

Eban proposes that the prime minister invite the U.S. ambassador and other representatives and impress upon them his concern regarding the seriousness of the situation. He should demand that the United States take immediate action.

Rapid compliance with the secretary-general's suggestion to evacuate Israeli troops from the Canal Zone[2] might impede the Soviet scheme and facilitate American action.

Notes

1. The Soviet foreign minister declared on 28 November in Copenhagen that he had credible information that Britain, France and Israel were planning to attack Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, along with neighbouring countries.
2. See no. 159.

164. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 30 November 1956

Coded Tel. TNW749; Outg.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

With reference to Eban's telegrams to the prime minister,[1] Herzog informs Eban that Ben-Gurion shares his doubts regarding the sincerity of the secretary-general. Nevertheless, no effort should be spared to put the latter to the test of proving his words. [.....][3]

In order to preserve good relations with France and the U.K., the prime minister has decided that Eytan shall inform their governments of the following:

1) The secretary-general has asked Israel to begin withdrawing from Sinai, and to make arrangements for the entry of the U.N. force into the evacuated areas.
2) Israel intends to inform the secretary-general that it will pull its troops back to a distance 30 miles east of the Canal, along its entire length, within 24 hours.
3) Israel will also inform the secretary-general of its agreement that Burns begin discussions on suitable arrangements for the entry of the U.N. force into the evacuated area in Sinai.
4) The main question is whether the United States will support Israel's position on the Gulf, Gaza and the demilitarisation of Sinai. It would be very desirable to learn the American position before answering the secretary-general, but if Eban is unable to find out in advance, the reply should not be delayed on this account.

5) Israel must also think about the stage following its announcement and the formulation of the arrangements with Burns, in the event that he demands that Israel withdraw from additional territory in Sinai. If Israel does so without clear guarantees from the secretary-general regarding the Gulf, Gaza and the demilitarisation, it will thereby be abandoning its fundamental position that it will not withdraw until it is guaranteed against a renewal of aggression by land and sea.

Notes

1. See no. 159.
2. See Eban to the Foreign Ministry, Tel. NWTA205, 28 November 1956, 93.01/2213/12. In this telegram Eban submits a proposed draft for the reply to Hammarskjöld.
3. The passage that was deleted includes corrections to Eban's draft. Eban is asked to omit any mention of the armistice lines with Egypt, as "those lines have ceased to exist." The final version of the reply appears in no. 172.

165. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 30 November 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA214; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban is worried by the decision to accede to Lloyd and Pineau's demand.[1] It would make a significant difference to public opinion if the Israeli reply were to be presented before the Anglo-French one. Otherwise they will receive the credit for solving the problem of the Canal and Israel will appear to be dragged along after them. In the matter of the cease-fire as well they caused the delay in Israel's reply,[2] thereby spoiling a lot of the political and public relations benefit.

While Eban greatly appreciates the tremendous assistance Israel has received from France in recent months, and particularly over the past few weeks, this does not mean that France has the right to jeopardise Israel's vital interests merely out of its own tactical considerations.

Eban is about to notify Hammarskjöld that Israel is inclined to accept his suggestion and he will inform him of this officially tomorrow.[4]

Notes

1. Britain and France demanded the right to be the first to inform the secretary-general of their willingness to begin removing their forces from the Canal Zone, and Pineau therefore requested that Israel delay its announcement by 24 hours (see Herzog to Eban,

NTWA 754, 30 November 1956, 93.01/2213/12). Ben-Gurion assented to the request, but ultimately, since the other two countries failed to publish any announcement, Israel preceded Britain and France by two days in announcing its troop withdrawal (see no. 172 below).
2. See no. 47.
3. See note 1 above.
4. See no. 172 below.

166. Note from the Israel Embassy in Washington to the U.S. Secretary of State. 30 November 1956

Copy: 93.08/409/3

Notes

1. On 29 November the *Izvestya* and *Pravda* newspapers published denunciations of Israel in the strongest possible terms, warning that Israel is digging its own grave and rushing towards suicide (see no. 168). These articles, which appeared in government and party journals in the Soviet Union, along with Shepilov's remarks in Copenhagen (see no. 163, note 1), increased the alarm in Israel over the U.S.S.R.'s intentions towards it. This alarm had been aroused following Bulganin's threats in his Note to Ben-Gurion (see no. 61).
2. See no. 133, note 3.

167. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 November 1956

Coded Tel. WNTA158; Outg.: 93.01/2219/13

Summary

In a meeting with Rountree, Shiloah presented Israel's Note[1] demanding that the United States make a public statement in response to the threats by the U.S.S.R. Shiloah expressed Israel's resentment over its omission from the U.S. declaration of 29 November, which strongly opposed any hostile move against the Middle Eastern members of the Baghdad Pact. He asserted that under the current conditions of increased Soviet incitement, it is vital that the United States clarify its position on Israel unequivocally, as silence on its part would be interpreted as very grave.

Rountree responded that Israel is currently in a state of defiance of U.N. resolutions. The United States supported these resolutions, and if at this stage it

were to issue the proposed statement, this step would undercut its influence with regard to finding solutions to the fundamental problems. This would harm Israel's interests as well. This is not to say that U.S. policy has changed, but this is not the moment for reiterating its policy.

Shiloah protested vigorously against the term "defiance," and reviewed the progress made in talks with the secretary-general. Rountree corrected himself, and said that he had been referring to the impression received by a number of U.N. member countries. He added that it is clear to him that the evacuation is a process that requires time, and he knows that important steps have been taken to execute it, but the process has yet to be completed.

Shiloah also noted that a way had been found to respond to the threats against Britain and France, which are no less "in defiance" than Israel. It is important to remember that unlike Britain, France and other countries, Israel is not a party to any alliance, and the absence of any serious American response to Soviet and Arab threats is effectively an abandonment of Israel. He also challenged the assumption that an American declaration would hamper U.S. efforts to stabilise the region. On the contrary: an explicit restatement of U.S. opposition to any threat to Israel's security would enhance American influence and bolster its ability to help resolve regional problems.

Notes

1. See no. 166.
2. See also no. 168.
3. Rountree also reiterated these remarks in a telephone conversation with Eban that took place the same day. See *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 627, pp. 1230–1231.

168. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and A. Eshel. 30 November 1956

Coded Tel. 765; Inc.: 130.09/2326/8

Summary

Avidar expresses his opinion concerning the article published in *Izvestya* on 29 November, saying that it is without a doubt the gravest, most virulent and most worrying article of any published to date. The Soviets are now apparently subscribing to the Arab viewpoint which considers the existence of Israel to be the source of danger in the region and disputes its very right to exist. The gravity of

this article lies in the fact that it grounds this new approach of the Soviet Union on slander regarding Israel's behaviour towards its neighbours throughout the years of its existence. The article may herald the onslaught of a new wave of propaganda and incitement against Israel. Despite the fact that it does not include any threat of Soviet military action against it, the adoption of the position that Israel's existence is open to dispute embodies the risk of such action when it suits Soviet and Arab interests and when it does not threaten to drag the Soviet Union into a global war.

Note

1. See no. 166, note 1.

169. M. Tov (New York) to W. Eytan. 30 November 1956

Coded Tel. 54; Inc.: 130.09/2333/3

Summary

Tov reports on his conversation with Aznar, a member of the Spanish delegation and a former ambassador to Buenos Aires. He is an enlightened person with influence on Franco.

1) They spoke about the situation in the Middle East, and Aznar recognised the danger posed by the Soviet-Muslim partnership.
2) Regarding diplomatic relations with Spain, he suggested working in stages. First, initiating cultural relations through the institute[2] in which he is very interested; second, the establishment of commercial ties. Only afterwards should the attempt be made to establish diplomatic relations, which he would try to advance on his return to Madrid.
3) Aznar explained that in his address before the Assembly regarding the status of Jerusalem, Artajo was not referring to internationalisation of the territory, but to a special status for purposes of preserving the holy places. They are thinking of stipulating a "personal status" for the three religions in Jerusalem.

Notes

1. In this cable Tov was asked for his evaluation of and reaction to the speech by Martin Artajo, the Spanish foreign minister, in the U.N. General Assembly on the status of Jerusalem. In his address Artajo referred only to internationalising the holy places, not the entire city (see Eytan to the Israel permanent mission to the United Nations, Tel. 977, 25 November 1956, 130.02/2459/4).

2. The Institute for Cultural Ties between Israel and Iberian America, Spain and Portugal.

170. G. Meir (New York) to the President of the U.N. General Assembly. 30 November 1956

Copy: 130.02/2387/9

Notes

1. See no. 156.
2. The memorandum is in file 130.02/2387/9, but was not printed here. It contains details regarding the arrest and imprisonment of Egyptian Jews, the expropriation of property and other economic measures taken against them, together with expulsion and revocation of citizenship. Proofs were also presented that the authorities' activities were organised and calculated.
3. Along with the two memoranda to the president of the Assembly, Kidron discussed the subject several times with the secretary-general, and also convened a meeting at the U.N. with the participation of representatives from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Switzerland. The purpose of these efforts was to induce the secretary-general to publish a report on the situation based on his own sources and to hold a debate in the Assembly (see Kidron to Eytan, Tel. 114, 9 December 1956, 130.09/2333/4).
   In addition to Israel's efforts to place the topic of the expulsion of Egyptian Jewry on the agenda of the U.N. General Assembly, a number of activities were organised under other auspices: the Israeli consulate in New York used its contacts to approach senators and governors with the request that they approach the White House and the State Department and demand that they intercede on behalf of Egyptian Jewry; the envoys of the Histadrut, the Israeli labour federation, in the United States were active in the AFL-CIO labour union; and demonstrations were held in front of the Egyptian embassy on a daily basis, led by the heads of Jewish organisations (see the general consulate in New York to the United States division, NWTA 228, 6 December 1956, 130.09/2338/23).
   The Foreign Ministry instructed Israeli envoys around the world to initiate action by the local Jewish communities to demand from their governments that their U.N. delegations undertake take steps to protest against the persecution of Egyptian Jewry. The ministry also instructed the envoys to ask the governments of the countries where they were serving to have their representatives in Cairo register protests with the Egyptian government, or even inquire about the condition of the Jews there, a step which might help alleviate the persecution (see the Foreign Ministry to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circular Tel. 636, 6 December 1956, 130.09/2377/14).

171. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan and E. Danin. 30 November 1956

Coded Tel. 846; Inc.: 130.15/3738/24

Summary

1) Sasson states that in his judgment one way to help thaw relations with the U.S. and earn Israel sympathy and support in the Vatican and among many U.N. delegations would be to present a constructive Israeli plan for solving the problem of the refugees in the Gaza Strip, which would be gladly accepted by the refugees themselves.
2) The main point of the plan would be Israel's willingness to annex the Strip as an indivisible part of the country or as an autonomous canton within it, and to absorb all of its refugees and residents, whose total number may reach 250,000 persons.
3) Admittedly, such a plan would seem to impose a heavy burden on Israel from an economic, political and security standpoint. But the burden is not impossible if the United States and other generous countries are willing to help financially, economically and morally.
4) There are individuals among the Gaza refugees with property in Israel that is valued at approximately 100 million liras. But from the moment these individuals become Israeli citizens they will have to take upon themselves all of the laws of the state, and this will absolve Israel of the need to give them their property or to compensate them immediately. Thus Sasson believes that Israel would be making a mistake if it tried to drive the property owners out of the Strip or proposed that they emigrate to other countries.

Note

1. This telegram contains a plan for the purchase of the property of Christian refugees in the Gaza Strip who would agree to emigrate and receive compensation in the country which receives them for the property they lost. It also proposes to compensate refugees who are the owners of abandoned property who agree to emigrate from the Gaza Strip (see Danin to the Israel embassies in Paris and in Rome, Coded Circular Tel. 469, 29 November 1956, 130.15/3738/24).

172. A. Eban (New York) to the U.N. Secretary-General. 1 December 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/3

Notes

1. See no. 80.
2. See no. 129.
3. See no. 159.
4. See Editorial Note no. 11.

173. G. Meir (New York) to the Prime Minister and W. Eytan. 1 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA72; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Golda Meir is adamantly opposed to Israel being the first country to recognise Kádár's regime in Hungary. She asks that Touval return to Israel, claiming that there is illness in the family or some other excuse. While she does not want to do anything to anger the Hungarians, she is not willing for Touval to present his credentials to the current government. Israel's arguments concerning Egyptian Jewry are accepted and linked in world public opinion to the events in Hungary.

The foreign minister had met with Christian religious leaders, who promised to act on behalf of Israel in general and Egyptian Jewry immediately. They too spoke of Egypt and Hungary in the same breath.[2]

Notes

1. Eytan refers to two matters in this telegram: the vote that was about to be held in the U.N. General Assembly over whether to accept the credentials of the Hungarian delegation and the presentation of credentials by the new Israel minister to Budapest, Meir Touval, which by coincidence was to take place simultaneously. Touval arrived in Budapest on 23 November, and he was the first diplomat scheduled to present his credentials to the government of János Kádár, which was set up in Budapest following the suppression of the rebellion. Meir held that Israel should vote against Hungary in the U.N. Assembly and that Touval's presentation of his credentials should be delayed. Eytan took issue with her position, saying in his telegram: "Please do not vote against. Touval was promised that Jewish emigration from Hungary will be renewed and under

no circumstances may we jeopardise it. We must preserve the few positions that we retain in Eastern Europe, and it is critically important to us, and no less to the Jews, that Touval present his credentials and begin to work as soon as possible. Yesterday the Romanians deferred the arrival of our envoy [A. Harel] indefinitely. It is a good thing we have managed to get a foot in the Hungarian door, and it would be very bad to remove it. At most abstain in the vote" (see Eytan to the Israel permanent mission to the United nations, Tel. YA32, 1 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12, and the Israel permanent mission to the United Nations to Eytan, Tel. XA 56, 1 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12).

2. Following the receipt of Meir's telegram, Eytan changed his position and informed Touval that according to the prime minister's decision he must "fall ill immediately" so that the presentation of his credentials would be delayed until after the debate on Hungary in the U.N. Assembly (see Eytan to the Israel minister in Budapest, Tel. 595, 2 December 1956, 130.09/2295/11).
As for the Assembly deliberations, Ben-Gurion decided that Israel would not participate and would not vote against the credentials of the Hungarian representative unless a large majority of the Assembly voted against him (see Eytan to the foreign minister, Tel. 43, 2 December 1956, 130.09/2332/3).

174. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2 December 1956

Coded Tel. 147; Inc.: 130.02/2459/5

Summary

Tsur spoke with Joxe and Daridan about the Soviet threat to France, Britain and Israel.[1] Joxe is sceptical regarding the veracity of the threats. They both believe the Soviets understand that it is inconceivable that the United States would not react to an attack on Israel. Nevertheless, they agreed that an American warning is vital. Tsur suggested that Pineau raise the subject of Israel's security in his address before the French parliament. They promised to speak with Pineau, and to instruct the French ambassador in Washington to put pressure on the State Department along these lines. Joxe proposed that the West demand a "freeze" in the status quo, and that it warn all countries in the region and outside it that any injury to any existing state would be treated as a threat to world peace.

The French perceive a substantial improvement in the American position. The president realised that he had gone too far, and now he is reining in his aides. The change is particularly prominent with regard to Nasser. Previously the State Department was willing to be reconciled with him, to reach an accommodation and even to rely on him for lack of an alternative. Now they are once again talking about the need to overthrow him.

Within 24 hours Pineau will announce a date for the withdrawal of the French army from Egypt, but will emphasise that France's basic demands remain unchanged: the evacuation of the Suez Canal, the establishment of an international regime over the Canal and maintaining a U.N. force there until the fundamental problems are resolved.

Notes

1. In this cable Avidar reports on his conversation with the U.S. ambassador in Moscow. In reaction to the Soviet threats against Britain, France and Israel, the ambassador stated that in his opinion it is clear to the Soviets that any military operation against Britain and France would automatically activate all NATO against them. With regard to Israel, however, the situation is different since Israel is not a member of NATO, nor does it have defence treaties with Britain and France (see Avidar to the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, Tel. 766, 30 November 1956, 130.09/2326/8).
2. Maurice Dejean, the French ambassador in Moscow.

175. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 3 December 1956

Coded Tel. TNWA776; Outg.: 130.09/2312/9

Summary

Ben-Gurion invited Ambassador Lawson for a talk.

The prime minister stated that there have not been many periods in history in which events were so dependent on the United States and its president. Now that he has instructed the chief of staff to begin implementing the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Suez Canal, in order to allow it to be cleared, he would like answers from the United States to the following questions Who will guarantee that:

1) once the Canal is cleared it will be open to free navigation, without any discrimination whatsoever?
2) if Nasser again blocks the Canal and demands the evacuation of the U.N. force, since Hammarskjöld agreed that the presence of the force there is contingent upon his agreement, that freedom of navigation will still be permitted in the Canal?
3) the Egyptians will not reinstate the blockade after Israel's withdrawal? Will the United States allow this to happen?
4) the Egyptian land and air offensive base will not be reestablished in Sinai once Israel pulls out?

In stressing that the primary motivation for Israel's decision to withdraw was the president's letter,[3] the prime minister asked whether the United States plans to rely on Nasser's good will. Just as the United States demanded that Israel withdraw its troops, is it not obligated also to demand that Egypt comply with the other paragraphs of the 2 November resolution?[4]

While in Cairo Nasser masquerades as a friend of the United States, he is simultaneously conducting a distinctly anti-American policy outside of his country's borders.

Ben-Gurion expressed profound disquiet regarding the false Soviet-Syrian reports about concentrations of Israeli troops on Syria's borders. Despite Hammarskjöld's refutations, Shepilov repeated the libel in Copenhagen,[5] and it was mentioned in an article in the *Izvestya* newspaper threatening the destruction of Israel.[6] In Bulganin's Notes the tone only got worse.[7]

The failure to include Lebanon and Israel with the countries of the Baghdad Pact in the State Department's warning to the Soviets is liable to be interpreted by them to mean that a Soviet attack on them is none of America's business. If the State Department is not willing to warn the U.S.S.R. publicly not to harm Israel,[9] the prime minister asks that it deliver such a warning to them through diplomatic channels.

He would like to know how the United States plans to translate the president's statements in his letters about his deep interest in Israel's welfare into practical policy.[10] Lawson promised to ask the State Department for clarifications.

Notes

1. All the points raised by Ben-Gurion in this conversation were sent by Eytan as guidelines to the Israel missions abroad in advance of the NATO meeting in Paris (see Editorial Note no. 205).
2. See no. 127, note 4.
3. See nos. 70, 79.
4. See Editorial Note no. 11.
5. See no. 163, note 1.
6. See no. 166, note 1.
7. See nos. 59 and 113.
8. The U.S. ambassador in Moscow told Avidar that Khrushchev had said that in order to take care of Israel there was no need for planes, as missiles (rockets) alone would suffice (see Avidar to the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, Tel. 766, 30 November 1956, 130.09/2326/8).
9. See no. 167.
10. See no. 154.
11. Compare Lawson's report of the conversation with Ben-Gurion in *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 627, pp. 1244–1248. The State Department's response (on 8 December) was routine: the United States was determined to bring about a settlement of the Israeli-Arab problem through the U.N. and in other ways. It will continue to demonstrate its

interest in the independence and territorial integrity of the countries of the Near East (*ibid.*).

176. British Commonwealth Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in London. 3 December 1956

Coded Tel. 524; Outg.: 130.09/2321/3

Summary

The British Commonwealth division forwards the following instructions to Elath in advance of his meeting with Lloyd. He should

1) inquire what Britain's operational plans are for pulling its forces back from the Canal Zone and ask whether the U.K. has reached any kind of agreement with the United States.
2) ask for Lloyd's clear support for Israel's position concerning freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal, the demilitarisation of Sinai and freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba.
3) raise the issue of the Soviet Union's penetration of Syria and its threats against Israel's existence (Shepilov's statement[2] and the article in *Izvestya*.)[3] He should ascertain what the British know about the shipment of Soviet arms and technicians to Syria, and what the likelihood is in their assessment of a Syrian-Soviet offensive against Israel. The failure to include Israel in the State Department's warning to the Soviets is liable to give the impression that an attack on Israel is none of America's business.[4] In order to prevent such an attack, it is absolutely vital that the West and the United States in particular send the Soviets a clear warning against causing any harm to Israel. He should try to find out what Britain would be willing to do in this regard.
4) He should hear from Lloyd what the upshot was of the talks with the Turks,[5] and what was decided in these talks with regard to Syria and the problems of the region in general.
5) He should ask what their assessment is of the situation in Jordan.

Notes

1. Elath had asked the Foreign Ministry for topics and suggestions in anticipation of his conversation with Lloyd (see Elath to the British Commonwealth division, Tel. 13, 30 November 1956, 130.09/2321/4).
2. See no. 163, note 1.
3. See no. 166, note 1.
4. See no. 167.

5. A high-ranking Turkish delegation headed by Prime Minister Menderes with the participation of the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, Birgi, arrived in London on 29 November for emergency talks with the British government. The talks centred on the danger posed to Turkey by the creation of an arms stockpile and Soviet base in Syria and on possible measures Turkey could take against the Syrian threat.

177. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 4 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA220; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban sums up the state of the negotiations in preparation for another talk with Hammarskjöld.[1]

Now that it has been agreed to deploy a U.N. force in the strip of the Canal Zone that was evacuated by Israel, the secretary-general will no doubt raise the problem of Sinai in general, aside from the issue of the Gulf, which he had suggested leaving for discussion at a later stage. The question is on what guarantees and commitments Israel should insist in view of his demands.

Eban assumes that Hammarskjöld will state unofficially that the deployment of a U.N. force in Sinai for a specified amount of time will ensure that the Egyptian military base will not be renewed during this period. It is doubtful whether he will say anything about the situation after the U.N. force leaves, but he will try to put assorted proposals on the table, including that of demilitarisation, in the hope that an agreement will be achieved before the U.N. force leaves.

Eban suggests listening to Hammarskjöld and then consulting about Israel's reply. It can be assumed that the next question will be the completion of the withdrawal from Sinai in coordination with the entry of the U.N. force.

The Americans admit that the Gulf must not be blockaded again and that it was undesirable to return the Egyptians to Gaza. Regarding the Gulf, Hammarskjöld may suggest stationing a U.N. force there at a later stage. Israel needs to create facts on the ground by sending ships there, building the oil pipeline, upgrading the road to Eilat and announcing that it will not allow the Egyptians to return to the Gulf.

Israel needs to start defining a position regarding Gaza and deciding how many refugees it can absorb in exchange for international recognition of its status. None of the parties recommends that the Egyptians return to Gaza, and it is to be hoped that at least this will be achieved.

Notes

1. See no. 159.

2. See no. 172.

178. B.V. Leary (Jerusalem) to W. Eytan (Jerusalem). 4 December 1956

Copy: 130.02/2448/7

Note

1. See no. 172.

179. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 4 December 1956

Coded Tel. TNWA788; Inc.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

In order to hamper any Egyptian efforts to reestablish their outposts in Sinai the IDF has destroyed positions, roads, runways for planes and train tracks. However the IDF scrupulously preserved the oil city.[1]

It can be assumed that the international force will discover these facts upon its entry into the evacuated area.[2] (A reporter from the *New York Times* heard about this operation in Port Said and the *News Chronicle* announced that Israel had such a plan.) The question therefore arises whether it is not in Israel's interest to report the operation in a dignified manner in advance, before it is publicised by other sources. There is a possibility that the Egyptians will demand an investigation of the entire territory of Sinai by representatives of the U.N.

Herzog urgently requests the delegation's opinion regarding the destruction in Sinai.[3]

Notes

1. Abu Rodeis.
2. See no. 178.
3. Eban responded to this cable as follows: "I will consult with the foreign minister. In my personal opinion we should state openly and proudly that the offensive base in Sinai posed a threat to our existence and to world peace and therefore we did what we could in order to prevent it from being reestablished. We are convinced that Sinai

is destined to fulfill its historic mission by serving as a natural partition between the armies of Israel and Egypt, and consequently we will seek its demilitarisation in the future as well. In view of the speeches we gave in the Assembly and elsewhere, no one will be surprised that we have drawn the sting of this base. It should be emphasised that everything of military value was destroyed" (see Eban to Herzog, NWTA 219, 4 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12).

180. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division. 4 December 1956

Coded Tel. 164; Inc.: 130.02/2459/5

Summary

In a conversation with Pineau, Tsur asked for his assessment regarding the situation that had arisen following the declaration by Britain and France that they are withdrawing from Egypt.[3] Pineau castigated the British for their willingness to give in to the demands of Hammarskjöld and the United States. He dismissed the possibility that Israel would face increased pressure to pull out immediately or that the Soviets might attack Israel.

Tsur expressed apprehension that the United States and Britain would sacrifice Israel's interests by agreeing to compromise with Nasser over the Canal even if Israel's right to passage for its ships was not ensured. They might demand that Israel leave Gaza and the Gulf and try to restore the stranglehold on Israel that existed before the war.

Pineau promised that France remained vigilant and was faithful to the line it had pursued to date. He did not, however, dismiss the possibility of Anglo-American pressure in this direction. He promised to raise the subject in his address before the French parliament on 18 December. In his speech at the U.N. he had already staked out a position and has no intention of changing it. Pineau confirmed that both the Western European states and NATO would discuss the Middle East, but the direction of the discussion would depend, of course, on the American position.

Tsur raised the subject of the oil pipeline,[7] and expressed disappointment that the matter had been held up in discussion for many weeks. He suggested that France participate in a 16-inch pipe, to be constructed ostensibly exclusively at Israel's initiative, which would pave the way for the larger pipe. After he explained the possibilities to Pineau the latter agreed to the plan and promised to urge on the relevant officials. He also promised to exert pressure without delay in favour of supplying oil to Israel.

Notes

1. In this telegram questions and topics for discussion were transmitted to Tsur in preparation for his conversation with Pineau (see the West European division to Tsur, Tel. 33, 4 December 1956, 130.02/2549/5).
2. A report on the conversation between Ben-Gurion and Lawson (the Foreign Ministry to the Israel missions abroad, 3 December 1956, 130.09/2377/4). See no. 175.
3. The British and French declaration concerning the withdrawal from Egypt. See no. 165, note 1.
4. On the appointment of General Alfred Gruenther to the position of President Eisenhower's military adviser. Gruenther was the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO until November 1956.
5. Hoover indeed announced his resignation on 8 December, and Christian Herter was appointed Dulles' deputy in his stead.
6. Eban also expressed great satisfaction at the choice of Herter: "Governor Herter comes to the State Department from an entirely different background from that of Hoover [who was close to the major oil companies]....It is too soon to guess how he will perform in the job, but there are reasons to believe that our standing at the State Department will improve greatly. From a personal standpoint I am pleased to find in that post somebody friendly who trusts the embassy" (see Eban to the United States division, Tel. XA 151, 13 December 1956, 93.01/2213/6).
7. See no. 126.

181. Israel Ambassador in Moscow to the East European Division. 4 December 1956

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2326/8

Summary

Avidar contends that it is inconceivable that the Israeli government should not react to the cancellation of fuel contracts[1] by the Soviet Union. The fact that the Soviets have not publicised the fact, at a time when they do not hesitate to attack Israel in the most venomous fashion, shows that publicity is inconvenient to them from the standpoint of their commercial reputation. He suggests presenting the Soviet embassy in Israel with a letter pointing out the illegal nature of the cancellation and demanding that the contracts be honoured. It should hold the Soviets responsible for all damages accruing from the failure to fulfill their obligations, since the official reason for the cancellation is a failure to grant export licenses. Avidar also recommends publishing the letter immediately after its presentation.

Notes

1. See no. 75, note 2; no. 118, note 6.
2. A telegram along the lines of Avidar's proposal was indeed sent on 28 December (the Foreign Ministry to the Soviet embassy in Israel, 28 December 1956, 130.04/1951/30).

182. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 5 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA 222; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban reports on his second meeting with Hammarskjöld. The discussion took place against the backdrop of the three Assembly resolutions on troop withdrawal, three Israeli announcements of partial withdrawals and the Israeli statement that it wishes to submit suggestions regarding the U.N. force. In this context the secretary-general raised several questions:

1) Israel has yet to announce that it has carried out the resolutions to the letter.
2) The possible entry of the U.N. force into territories evacuated by Israel (transmission of information regarding minefields).
3) The reports of destruction in Sinai[3] during the process of withdrawal.
4) The timetable. Here he noted that the British and French forces are to pull out of the territory they occupy by mid-December.

Eban summed up Israel's position in principle as defined during the previous meeting with the secretary-general: the commitment to evacuate Sinai in accordance with the 8 November announcement[5] remains valid. The withdrawal is bound up with the entry of the U.N. force and the fulfillment of its tasks. It is necessary to ensure that the withdrawal does not set off a renewal of hostilities on land and sea.

The issues of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the future of the Gaza Strip will be relegated to a later stage.

Regarding the Gulf, the secretary-general stated that the U.N. will have to ensure that freedom of navigation is respected; in effect, the Gulf of Aqaba should be treated as any other international sea lane. He also confirmed that the turn of the Gaza Strip would come at a later stage, although he lacks the authority to discuss political issues with Israel. In his negotiations with the British and the French a target date was specified for the withdrawal, and he must demand the same thing from Israel, aside from the two special problems. Eban responded that he would convey the secretary-general's demand to his government, but pointed out that once Israel knows more about the deployment plans for the U.N. force it will be able

to delineate its plans. The objective should be a withdrawal that is integrated and coordinated with the U.N. force's plans.

Notes

1. See no. 159.
2. See no. 146.
3. See no. 178.
4. The reference is to the IDF's withdrawal beyond a strip 50 kilometres wide from the Suez Canal; see no. 172.
5. See no. 80.
6. The Israeli-Egyptian Armistice Agreement specified, at Egypt's insistence, that the Nitzana region would be proclaimed a demilitarised zone (Article VIII of the agreement). The armistice committee was located there. Upon the onset of Fedaiyun operations, tension in the Nitzana region mounted, and in response to these operations Israel began to carry out military operations there. In November 1955 a reprisal raid was carried out in Sabhah, in the Nitzana region, after part of an Egyptian battalion had dug itself into Israeli territory. Following the battle the Egyptians withdrew.
7. See Editorial Note no. 69.
8. The full record is in file 93.03/342/5.
9. Following the conversation between Hammarskjöld and Eban, Rafael held an unofficial talk with the secretary-general. Hammarskjöld requested that Israel set a date for the evacuation of all of Sinai, ideally by the date specified by the British and French for withdrawing their forces from Egypt, 14 December (see Rafael to Herzog, NWTA 223, 5 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12).

183. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 5 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA224; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban sums up his conversation with Hammarskjöld.

A) On the question of the Gulf, the secretary-general reiterated the position he expressed on 28 November[4]: the Gulf is an open sea passage, despite the fact that the Egyptians hold sovereignty along the coastline. The U.N. force must plan its operations in keeping with this assumption.

B) With regard to Gaza, the approach is to leave Israeli troops there until things become clearer, while stressing that the Assembly resolution grants the U.N. the right to enter at any time it chooses. Thus there is a contradiction between the de facto and de jure status of Gaza.

C) The secretary-general wants to bring about a situation in which a U.N. force is stationed in all the territories conquered by Israel, aside from the Gulf of Aqaba

and Gaza. He does not want to enter into the question of who can guarantee that the U.N. force would not be expelled suddenly, leaving Sinai open to the return of Egyptian troops.

Eban suggests clarifying Israel's position on the Sinai withdrawal and freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal to Hammarskjöld; contacting other delegations, such as those of the United States, France, Britain, and members of the Advisory Committee, in order to mobilise support regarding Gaza, the Gulf, the Canal and guarantees that Egypt will not return to Sinai by expelling the U.N. force; continuing parallel activities in Washington.

Notes

1. See no. 182.
2. See no. 182, note 9.
3. See no. 172.
4. See no. 159.
5. The Indians and Yugoslavs who participated in the U.N. force announced that they would not remain on Egyptian soil against Egypt's will.

184. A. Eban (New York) to J.F. Dulles (Washington). 5 December 1956

Copy: 93.08/421/9

Notes

1. An organisation composed of representatives of American oil companies engaged in foreign operations set up in the summer of 1956.
2. See no. 75, note 2.

185. S. Bentsur (Vienna) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 December 1956

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.02/2459/5

Summary

Bentsur disagrees with Meir's position on recognition of the new government in Hungary and when the Israel envoy to Budapest should take up his post.

A) The legation was given a written promise that Hungarian Jews would be permitted to emigrate freely to Israel, and the current government has announced on various occasions its intention to keep this promise.[2]

B) Hungarian Jews were looking forward to the minister's arrival. Any drastic step will cause disappointment and despair and will be interpreted as an abandonment of Hungarian Jewry.

C) Despite the change in regimes, Jews were not targeted.[3]

D) The legation has interviewed hundreds of people without hearing of a single case of expulsion of Jews.

E) None of the great Western powers has severed its normal relations with Hungary, and no representative has been ordered to leave.

Notes

1. See no. 173, note 1.
2. Gideon Rafael met with the deputy foreign minister of Hungary, Andre Mish, in New York. Mish told him that Hungary's new regime was very concerned about the well-being of Hungarian Jews, and would be liberal towards Jews who wished to immigrate to Israel. He even promised to introduce Rafael to Foreign Minister Imre Horváth so that the latter could repeat these assurances (see Rafael to Eytan, Tel. 88, 5 December 1956, 130.09/2333/4).
3. Contrary to what is stated here, Touval related the following from Budapest: "Delegations and individuals from assorted provincial towns report threats against Jews. Over the last few days Jews have again been attacked and beaten simply for being Jewish. We are verifying the facts. A number of Jews have left their homes and moved to Budapest where they await permission to immigrate to Israel, which is literally necessary to save their lives. There are Jews who believe that if the fact of the antisemitic outbreaks is publicised in Free Europe broadcasts, which everyone here listens to, there are likely to be pogroms in villages where there are no Russian troops" (Touval to the East European division, Tel. 504, 5 December 1956, 130.09/2295/13).

186. A. Eshel (Jerusalem) to Y. Avidar (Moscow). 5 December 1956

Coded Tel. 481; Outg.: 130.09/2326/6

Summary

Eshel assesses the threat posed by the U.S.S.R. and the possible alternatives for Israel.

Despite the sombre situation,[1] Israel is neither weak nor helpless. Concern for Soviet Jewry mandates that it persist in the struggle, however long it takes. In

Jerusalem they do not believe that this flexing of muscles by the Soviet Union is tantamount to proof of its ability to carry out its threats, or an expression of a readiness to act on them.[2]

In this state of affairs, in Israel great importance is ascribed to the fact that the embassy team remains in Moscow, despite the numerous objective difficulties. This enables a correct apprehension of the situation, fruitful coordination and the preservation of vital interests.

Note

1. Avidar expressed his assessment (based on the opinions of key individuals in the Moscow diplomatic corps) that the Soviets are not interested in war, and will refrain from any step that might lead to one. Peace is more necessary to them than ever in view of the events in Eastern Europe, whose impact on the U.S.S.R. is not only political but also involves heavy economic exertions (see Avidar to the East European division, Tel. 274, 4 December 1956, 130.02/2459/5).
   On 8 December the Soviet Union announced that in light of the withdrawal of British, French and Israeli forces from Egypt, Soviet volunteers would not be sent there.

187. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 6 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA92; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

In a conversation with Eban, Bunche said the following:

A) Israel should consider the secretary-general's statement regarding UNEF's obligation to guarantee freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba[1] as a significant achievement. The Great Powers are also encouraging this trend in his thought.

B) Opinions differ in the secretary-general's office as to whether the U.N. should agree to accept direct responsibility for Gaza. Hammarskjöld's line is to retain the prerogative without exercising it. The expectation is that Israel should volunteer to absorb a large portion of the refugees, and then a way will be found to come to terms with its presence in Gaza.

C) The secretary-general and the Americans intend that UNEF remain there for an extended period, up to a year, so that various problems can be resolved before it leaves.

D) The U.N. force in Sinai will be composed of soldiers from a number of countries so that neither the Indians nor the Yugoslavs will be able to create a vacuum in Egypt's favour by suddenly withdrawing at Nasser's behest.

E) Bunche's personal recommendation is to say to the secretary-general that Israel is willing to complete the withdrawal except for Gaza and the Gulf, but would like a commitment that will guarantee it against the creation of a vacuum through the departure of the U.N. and the entry of Egyptian forces into Sinai.

Notes

1. See no. 182.
2. See no. 183, note 5.

188. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 6 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA94; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Kidron sends Herzog a summary of his consultation with the foreign minister and Eban.

1) The secretary-general should be asked for a clarification of his statement during their first meeting[1] that no Egyptian force would enter Sinai together with or following the U.N. force. Israel should try to pin him down on this point. The question of the composition of the Sinai force should also be clarified, with regard to the conflicting views of the Indians and the Yugoslavs on the one hand and the Canadians on the other.
2) In order to ensure that Egypt does not enter the evacuated areas, Israel should withdraw from strips of territory (as in the first withdrawal) and not just specific points.
3) The secretary-general's statement that preventing hostilities in the Tiran Straits is included among the tasks of the U.N. force enables Israel to make an analogous demand that the force remain next to the Suez Canal in order to prevent belligerent acts there as well. This will kill two birds with one stone: the U.N. force will both protect freedom of navigation in the Canal and control the gates to the main transportation arteries to Sinai.

Notes

1. See no. 159.
2. See no. 183, note 5.

189. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to A. Eban (New York). 6 December 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/3

Note

1. See Editorial Note no. 69.

190. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to R. Shiloah (Washington). 6 December 1956

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2312/9

Summary

Herzog informs Shiloah that various sources have received the impression that there has been a positive development in the Vatican's attitude toward Israel due to apprehensions over Nasser's pan-Islamic policies and his undermining Western positions in the Middle East. The possibility is being explored of making contact with the Vatican in order to induce it to influence Catholic countries to be more understanding of the position of Israel, which serves as a bulwark against such leanings.[1] It is worth investigating the possibility of finding an appropriate American personality who could try to influence the Vatican.

In addition to the usual argument concerning the dangers to the Western position in the region, special emphasis needs to be placed on Nasser's subversion in Lebanon.

Notes

1. See no. 317.
2. The letter was not found.
3. The reference is apparently to Eli Ginzberg, the adviser to President Eisenhower on national manpower.

191. G. Meir (New York) to W. Eytan. 6 December 1956

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2312/9

Summary

The foreign minister is adamant that Israel must not recognise the Kádár regime, which refuses even to receive the U.N. secretary-general as a guest.[2] If Israel does so it will not be able to hold its head up in decent international society and other states will not discuss with Israel matters that are important to it.

Notes

1. In this cable Eytan reported that Shaul Avigur had also joined the request that Touval "get better" soon (see Eytan to the foreign minister, YA 70, 6 December 1956, 130.09/2333/4). On 9 December the government decided that Touval could present his credentials (see stenographic record of the government meeting, 9 December 1956, in file 77.0/9/32).
2. On 4 December the head of the Hungarian delegation to the U.N. announced that his government was inviting the U.N. secretary-general to visit Hungary. At the time the General Assembly was discussing a proposed resolution demanding that Hungary enable the entry of U.N. observers without delay. The following day the head of the Hungarian delegation announced a postponement of the visit, which had been scheduled for 16 December. In response, the Assembly passed a resolution demanding that Hungary and the U.S.S.R. announce by 7 December their assent to the entry of U.N. observers.

192. Y. Shimoni (Rangoon) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 December 1956

Coded Tel. 614; Inc.: 130.02/2459/5

Summary

In a conversation with Shimoni, the prime minister of Burma made the following remarks:

A) It is important that Israel make a distinction between itself and the French and the British, and convince its friends and the world that there is not and never was any connection between them.

B) An unconditional withdrawal is essential. Israel should voice all of its claims and suggestions separately in the U.N., and not make them a condition for withdrawal.

C) When it comes to practical proposals, Burma may support Israel's line, once the obstacle in principle is removed through an unconditional withdrawal.

D) Burma's friendship for Israel and appreciation of its difficulties remains unwavering in the face of Arab threats, and they have proved it before in Bombay and Delhi.[2] The future, however, depends upon Israel's actions.

E) He promised to approach Nasser regarding Egyptian Jewry.

Notes

1. In this cable Shimoni reported on his conversation with Barrington, the director-general of the Burmese Foreign Ministry. They discussed how Burma was dragged into supporting the withdrawal initiatives in the U.N., and the absence of efforts to find constructive solutions to the Israeli-Arab conflict (see Shimoni to the Foreign Ministry, Tel. 610, 30 November 1956, 130.09/2360/10).
2. In the Conference of Socialist Movements in Asia; see no. 30, note 3.
3. A word is missing in the original.

193. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in New York, London and Paris. 7 December 1956

Coded Circ. Tel. 537; Outg.: 130.16/2952/8

Summary

Tekoah reports on Burns' meeting with Chief of Staff Dayan on 6 December.

Burns informed him that the Yugoslavs had already advanced deeper into Sinai and reported that they had found the roads on the Qantara and Ism'ailia axes destroyed and mined.[1] Burns intends to rebuild these roads.

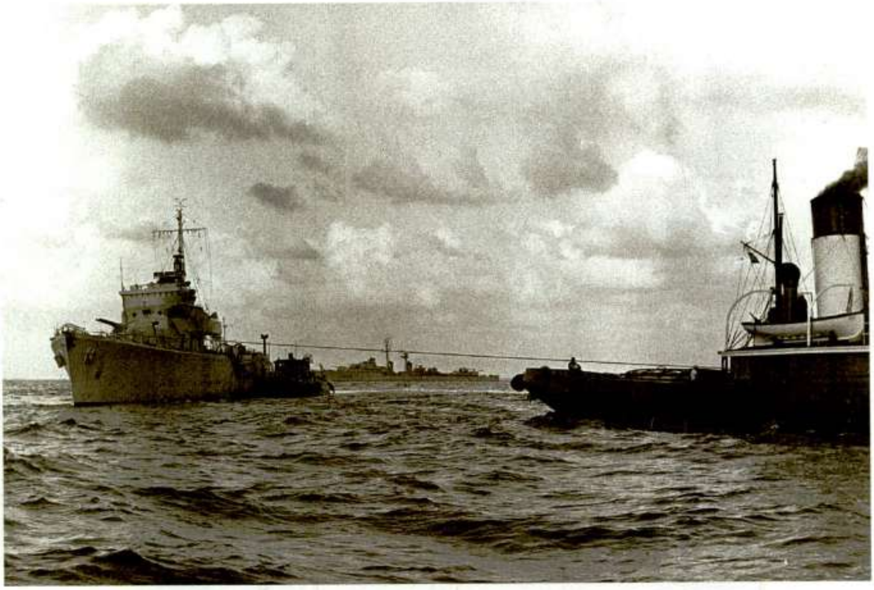
With reference to Dayan's inquiry as to whether there are Egyptian forces east of the Suez Canal, Burns replied that there may be some, but not many, to the best of his knowledge. As commander of the U.N. force, he would have preferred it had they stayed west of the Canal; however, he fears that the secretary-general and he himself do not have the authority to prevent their entry into Sinai. Dayan stressed that Israel has withdrawn based on the clear supposition that U.N. forces would enter the evacuated area, not Egyptian ones. He would like to present the prime minister with a clear answer on this issue.



Meeting of ambassadors at the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, 18 October 1956. Right to left: Foreign Minister Golda Meir, Eliahu Elath, Abba Eban, Jacob Tsur, Yosef Avidar. Photographer: Fritz Cohen, Government Press Office



IDF troops in the Mitla pass, October 1956. Photographer: Avraham Vered, Government Press Office



The captured Egyptian destroyer *Ibrahim El-Awal* is towed into Haifa Port, 31 October 1956. Government Press Office



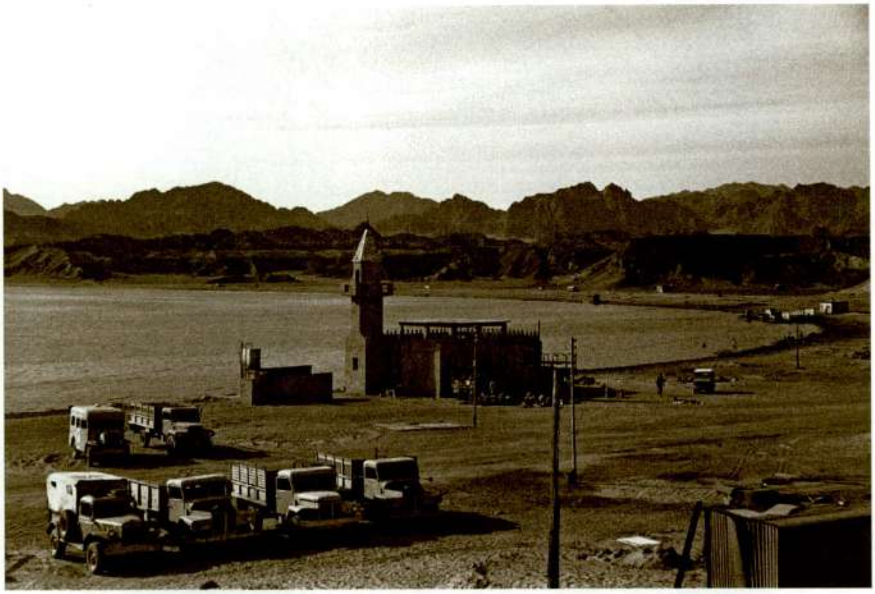
IDF forces advancing on the Suez Canal, 2 November 1956. Government Press Office



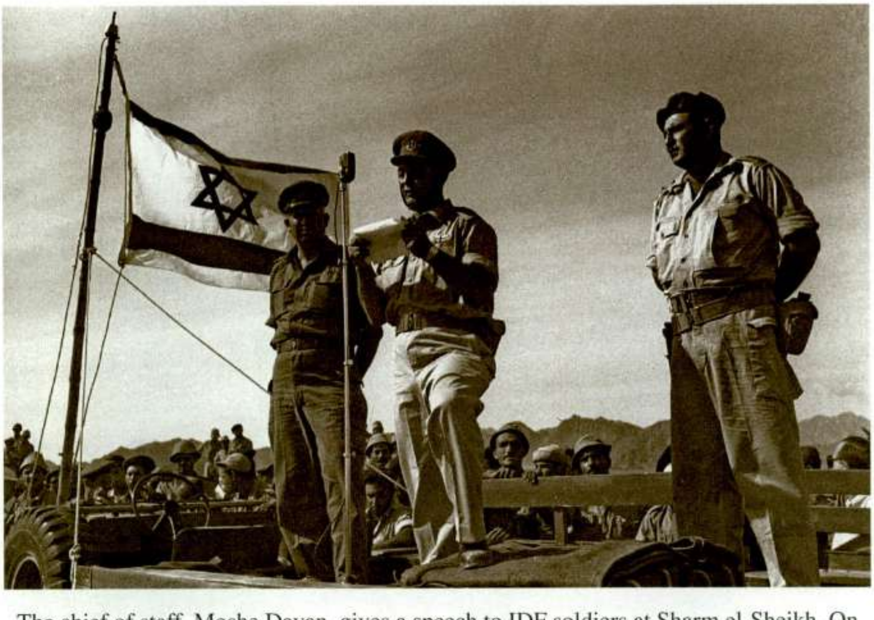
An IDF patrol in Sinai, 3 November 1956. Government Press Office



IDF troops in El-Arish after the surrender of the town, 3 November 1956.
Government Press Office



Sharm el-Sheikh, 6 November 1956. Government Press Office



The chief of staff, Moshe Dayan, gives a speech to IDF soldiers at Sharm el-Sheikh. On his left Asaf Simhoni, on his right Avraham Yaffe. 6 November 1956. Government Press Office



Soviet Ambassador Alexandre Abramov
leaves Israel after the announcement
of his recall to the U.S.S.R., 6 November
1956. Israel State Archives



The commander of the United Nations Emergency Force, Major-General Eedson Burns
and Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan at a meeting to discuss the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai,
16 December 1956. Government Press Office



Eliahu Elath, 1958.
Photographer: Moshe Pridan,
Government Press Office



Jacob Tsur, 1949.
Photographer: Hugo Mendelson,
Government Press Office



Abba Eban, 1959.
Government Press Office



Reuven Shiloah, 1948.
Government Press Office



Walter Eytan, 1959.
Government Press Office



A conversation between Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir in the Knesset, 1 November 1962. Photographer: Fritz Cohen, Government Press Office

Burns expressed his wish to establish direct contact with the chief of staff. He said that Major Austin from U.N. Headquarters will be posted in Tel Aviv and will establish direct radio contact with UNEF.

Dayan expressed his reservations over the choice of the Yugoslavs in particular to enter Sinai. Burns remarked that he can sympathise with Israel's concerns but he has to make use of the troops he was given.

Note

1. See nos. 178, 179.

194. M. Kidron (New York) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 7 December 1956

Copy: 130.02/2459/5

Summary

In a talk he held with Eban, Bunche said that official abrogation of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement would work in Israel's favour. He holds that the best way to go about it would be to request the secretary-general to arrange a meeting between the Israeli and Egyptian delegates, within the framework of Article XII of the Agreement, for discussing its abrogation. Whether the Egyptians assent or not, Israel would gain politically.

In a deliberation in which the minister of foreign affairs, Eban, Lourie, Najar, Comay, Kidron and Shiloah participated, it was concluded that the question of the abrogation of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement could not be left in its present ambiguous state, which leads to constant referrals and demands from the secretary-general, the General Assembly and the Security Council. It was essential to find a suitable legal framework for abrogating the agreement. It was proposed to write a memorandum to the secretary-general, which would state that since Egypt, by not complying with various articles of the agreement, has in effect nullified it, the Israeli government sees itself as freed from all obligations pursuant to the agreement, with the exception of those stemming from the United Nations Charter.

Notes

1. See no. 189.
2. See Editorial Note no. 69.

3. Comay opposed the raising of questions of principle relating to the armistice agreements, such as whether the U.N. General Assembly has legal authority to annul articles of the agreement; whether the Security Council resolution of August 1949 can serve as an independent source of authority for the "armistice regime"; whether the armistice agreements are integral or divisible. Comay pointed out that negotiations had already been held on these issues between the prime minister and the U.N. secretary-general, which had reached a dead end (see Comay to Eban, 7 December 1956, 130.02/2459/5).

195. D. Hammarskjöld to A. Eban (New York). 7 December 1956

Orig. 93.03/3064/3

Notes

1. See no. 181.
2. See Editorial Note no. 11.
3. At the meeting with Bunche, who gave Kidron Hammarskjöld's letter to Eban, Kidron disagreed with the facts that the secretary-general presented in his letter, as well as with his interpretation of them. He argued that it could be assumed that the mines had been laid before the cease-fire, not after it, and that demolition of roads and railways was unrelated to the cease-fire as set forth in the General Assembly resolution of 2 November. Bunche, after going over the text of the resolution, agreed with him that it did not include a ban on demolition operations and that there was no solid legal basis for Hammarskjöld's claims (see Kidron to Herzog, Tel. 104, 130.02/2459/1, 7 December 1956, in reply to the report in no. 193).

196. J. F. Dulles to A. Eban (Washington). 7 December 1956

Copy: 93.08/409/3

Note

1. No. 166.

197. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 7 December 1956

Coded Tel. WNT163; Outg.: 93.01/2213/6

Summary

Eban reports on the minister of foreign affairs' talk with Hoover and the talk Shiloah held with Rountree and Bergus.[1]

1. **The U.N. force.** The U.S. position is that the U.N., not Egypt, should decide when and under what circumstances the force is pulled out of Egypt. There are grounds for assuming that this is also the secretary-general's position and that the United States is backing his efforts.
2. **Israel's security.** In a message transmitted to the Israeli government,[2] the United States made clear its support for Israel's integrity and security. There is no intention of issuing a new statement at present. The United States has no estimates that Syria has concentrations of troops or weapons besides the Egyptian arms smuggled in for safekeeping. There is a long-term issue of Soviet political penetration of Syria and the topic should be considered in these terms, rather than in terms of an imminent military operation.

The minister of foreign affairs raised the issue of Egyptian Jewry with Rountree alone. Rountree affirmed that serious and severe "injustices" are being perpetrated. The Egyptians claim that the implementation is more severe than the authorities intended, and perhaps this excuse could provide an opportunity for them to climb down. The U.S. ambassador is constantly raising the issue with the Egyptian government. Rountree responded with indifference and was elusive with regard to proposals for intensifying action on behalf of Egyptian Jewry, mainly for taking a strong public stand.

Notes

1. See *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 640, pp. 1274–1275.
2. See no. 196.

198. M. Erell (Ottawa) to the British Commonwealth Division. 7 December 1956

Coded Tel. 329; Inc.: 130.02/2456/9

Summary

Erell reports on the Canadian government's decision to suspend for the time being the delivery of the aircraft which Israel had purchased in Canada. In this regard, there is no difference between planes that have passed into Israeli ownership and those not yet purchased, since there is an embargo on export of arms and military equipment to all Middle Eastern countries. This decision is unrelated to the U.N. resolution of 2 November.

Notes

1. J.B.C. Watkins, head of the Commonwealth and Middle East Division, Canadian Department of External Affairs.
2. The telegram has not been found. See *DCER 1956–1957*, Vol. 22, no.70, pp. 128–129.
3. See Editorial Note no. 11.
4. Word missing in original.
5. During December, after it had been made clear to Israel that Canada would not change its decision to suspend delivery of the aircraft, including the eight already transferred to Israeli ownership, the Israeli government decided to see this as grounds for cancelling the transaction altogether and demanding a refund for the money already paid for the planes (see Comay to Léger, 93.08/391/2, 31 December 1956).

199. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 8 December 1956

Coded Tel. 89; Outg.: 130.02/2459/14

Summary

Herzog proposes a formulation for a reply to Hammarskjöld that would enable Israel to stall without giving an undertaking for a full withdrawal. A clash with the secretary-general should be avoided at this point, lest he report to the General Assembly on Israeli non-compliance and thus cause the adoption of yet another resolution, which may set a deadline for the final withdrawal.

1) The withdrawal will continue while maintaining continuous contact with Burns. If the secretary-general presses for details, he is to be told that there would be a withdrawal at a rate of 25 kilometres per week.
2) The withdrawal along the Suez Canal will continue. As for the area that extends southward from there to Sharm el-Sheikh, Israeli control should be secured over the supply route through the Mitla Pass.
3) All arrangements concerning the stationing of the U.N. force in Sinai and the definition of its duties should be clarified before the withdrawal. The rate of withdrawal should be determined based on developments there. No deadline should be fixed for completion of the withdrawal.
4) The demand for freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal should be asserted.
5) As for the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip, they should cite Hammarskjöld's own words in support of postponing withdrawal from both to a later date.

Notes

1. In this telegram, Herzog asked the members of the Israel mission to the U.N. to state their opinion on the proposals transmitted to them (in the above telegram), so that after the government had discussed them, the final proposal for the secretary-general could be drawn up (see Herzog to the Israel permanent mission to the United Nations, Tel. 821, 8 December 1956, 130.02/2459/14). At the government meeting on 9 December the directives to the U.N. mission were approved (see stenographic report of the government meeting, 9 December 1956 in file 77.0/9/32).
2. See Editorial Note no. 205.
3. See no. 159.
4. See no. 182.
5. See no. 183.
6. See no. 188.
7. See no. 80.
8. See no. 143.
9. See no. 11.
10. See no. 201.

200. M. Fischer (Ankara) to W. Eytan. 8 December 1956

Coded Tel. 622; Inc.: 130.09/2289/13

Summary

Fischer reports on his talk with Birgi on the future of Turkey-Israel relations after the recall of the Turkish minister to Israel and his own forthcoming departure.

Birgi said that aside from the recall of the envoys, no other change has been decided on and that commercial relations will continue as usual.

Turkey shares Israel's misgivings about the Soviet penetration of Syria; however, it cannot see any solution to this problem or to the demilitarisation of Sinai and the realisation of Israel's demand for freedom of navigation. The situation would be different if the war had ended in a complete victory.

Notes

1. In May 1956 the Turks detained several Israeli fishing vessels for allegedly entering Turkey's territorial waters. The crew were released, but the ships remained in custody.
2. Belbez, a Turkish lawyer, was involved in the case of the detention of the fishing vessels.
3. See no. 150.
4. See no. 151.

201. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 9 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA229; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban expresses his opinion that any attempt by Israel to evade evacuating Sinai would put it at great risk. Suspension of phases of the withdrawal could serve as a basis for negotiations to obtain worthwhile guarantees, but it was unrealistic to aspire to a situation where the world would acquiesce in Israel's staying in El-Arish or any part of Sinai. If Israel could achieve free navigation in the Gulf and perhaps through the Suez Canal, non-return of the Egyptians to Gaza and guarantees against the reinstatement of the Egyptian force in Sinai, this would constitute a significant success. This, in his opinion, is the maximum that can be hoped for.

As for the reply to the secretary-general, it has been decided in consultation with the minister of foreign affairs that discussion should focus on what Israel intends to do, rather than on specifying why it will not evacuate the southern region of Sinai (in order to maintain supply and access routes), so that Hammarskjöld should not propose stationing the U.N. force in Sharm el-Sheikh immediately.

Minutes of the previous meeting with Hammarskjöld[2] show his unwavering adherence to the principle of freedom of navigation in the Gulf, which the U.N. military force must ensure, as well as his acceptance for the present of the prevailing situation in Gaza, while stressing its legal right to enter whenever it so wishes. In

view of this situation, there is no need to raise issues at this point if he does not do so himself.

Eban will meet with the members of the Advisory Committee and with the Americans to obtain their support for Israel's position.

Notes

1. No. 199.
2. See minutes of the talk in file 93.03/3042/5.

202. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Rome. 9 December 1956

Coded Tel. 682; Outg.: 130.09/2357/4

Summary

Eytan relays to the embassy the text of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' note regarding the E.N.I. (Ente Nationale Idrocarburi) oilfield in Sinai.

After taking control of the region, the IDF undertook to safeguard the property and equipment at the drilling site, but even so part of it was removed. Israel will pay the company compensation for this equipment. The drilling rig that was seized will be returned to the company and it will be compensated.

Note

1. The note was sent following a suggestion by the Italian ambassador to Israel, Benedetto Capomazza, to Eytan. In the accompanying telegram, Eytan wrote: "We have not touched the factory itself, which could easily resume production in due course. On the contrary, as I telegraphed you, we have salvaged the factory, which could have been lost if it were not for our swift action" (see Eytan to Sasson, Tel. 680, 9 December 1956, 130.09/2357/4).

203. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 10 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA231; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban reports that Hammarskjöld approached him through Bunche and requested that in addition to the replies on refraining from destroying the main axes[1] in Sinai, Israel would confirm that from now on it would not lay mines and would refrain from destroying other roads. The secretary-general does not intend to dwell on the past, but he would like to convey to the Advisory Committee that since cooperation and contacts with General Burns were established, no further explosions have occurred. This is being said as a consequence of the General Assembly's resolutions concerning abstention from any action that may hinder implementation of its resolutions.

A talk has been scheduled for Eban with Hammarskjöld and Bunche, and he will endeavour to persuade the secretary-general to be satisfied with further partial withdrawal without commitment to the later phases. The Americans are not pressing the issue, as long as they see that the evacuation process is progressing steadily.

Bunche clearly hinted that if Israel does not promise that it has no intention of blowing up the airport at El-Arish, Hammarskjöld will demand that a UNEF guard be positioned there forthwith, as this airport will constitute an important link for the organisation of the UNEF set-up in Sinai. Eban requests directives for dealing with this issue.[2]

Notes

1. In a letter to Hammarskjöld, Eban stated on behalf of the Israeli government that directives had been given to cause no damage to both main axes in north Sinai. However Israel stated that it is unable to repair the damage already inflicted on the roads in Sinai during the course of military operations carried out there (see Eban to Hammarskjöld, 10 December 1956, 93.03/3064/3).
2. Herzog notified Eban that he could promise that Israel would not blow up the airport at El-Arish (see Tel.YA 112, 11 December 1956, 93.01/2186/4).

204. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 11 December 1956

Coded Tel. 126; Inc.: 130.02/2459/5

Summary

Kidron reports on his talk with Barco.[1]

1) The goal the secretary-general and the United States are aiming at is the stationing of a U.N. force in the Suez Canal area, which, in addition to its job of safeguarding the equipment for clearing the Canal, would also help to ensure free navigation. The secretary-general is still holding negotiations with Egypt on this issue, and therefore would not make commitments to Israel or any other party for fear of obstructing the negotiations.
2) The Egyptians, as well as Britain and France, have agreed to commence negotiations on a new regime for the Suez Canal immediately following the evacuation of the forces from Port Said. Barco mentioned the six principles endorsed by the Security Council and the interchange of letters between the secretary-general and Fawzi as a possible basis for negotiations. At this point, the American proposal on the Suez Canal[3] will not be submitted.
3) As for resolution of the Israeli-Arab issue, he believes it is best to approach it through the issue of free navigation; if this issue is resolved — and chances for success are substantial — a situation favourable for advancing towards further arrangements would result. There is no intention of pursuing the other resolution proposal at present.[4]

Notes

1. James Barco, counsellor to the U.S. delegation to the United Nations.
2. See no. 9, note 1.
3. See Editorial Note no. 45. The prospect that the American proposals for establishing two committees for handling the issues of Suez and Israeli-Arab relations would be raised in the NATO Council meeting was frustrated due to Hammarskjöld's request to halt discussion on the subject (see Bendor to the West European division, Tel. 216, 11 December 1956, 130.09/2347/2).
4. See Editorial Note, *ibid.*

205. Editorial Note

The Meeting of the NATO Council in Paris (11–14 December 1956)

The ministers of foreign affairs, defence and finance of the 15 NATO member states convened in Paris for the Treaty Council's annual meeting. The meeting ended with a series of resolutions, some of which addressed Middle East issues, for the first time in the history of NATO. In the official concluding statement it was stated that the Council members were concerned first and foremost about any danger to the security of the NATO area. The Council discussed the threat that had materialised as a result of Soviet penetration of the Middle East, and since security and stability in this region were essential to world peace, the Council had decided to keep an eye on developments there.

In another resolution, stress was put on the swift clearing of the Suez Canal in accordance with the resolution adopted on 2 November at the U.N. General Assembly. The six principles endorsed by the Security Council on 13 October 1956 would serve as the basis for a settlement on use of the Canal following its reopening (see no. 9, note 1). As for Israeli-Arab relations, it was stated that the Council members had reached agreement on the pressing need for a permanent political settlement between the parties mediated by the U.N., including a solution to the refugee problem. The need for massive financial support for the area's development was also acknowledged.

Despite the expansion of NATO's area of concern to include the Middle East as requested by Britain and France, in fact the U.S. viewpoint was decisive both in New York, at the U.N. General Assembly, and in Paris, at the NATO Council. The Americans insisted that all negotiations on critical issues in the Middle East – withdrawal of forces, the armistice agreements, freedom of navigation and negotiations towards peace – be exclusively mediated by the U.N. Even though there was no explicit mention of the two committees, whose establishment the United States had already initiated in early November (see Editorial Note no. 45), the essence was the same.

Alongside the Council meetings, Dulles held personal talks with Pineau, Lloyd and Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Luns on Middle East issues. But the talks remained confined to an exchange of opinions, since Dulles refused to go into detailed discussion on these issues.

Israel saw the NATO Council conference as an opportunity to present to the participating governments its demands and ideas on the issues of freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and in the Gulf of Aqaba, demilitarisation of Sinai and the Soviet threat to the Middle East. In preparation for the conference Eytan transmitted to the Israeli representatives abroad an urgent directive to make their utmost efforts to that effect (see Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circular

Tel. 518, 4 December1956, 130.02/2459/5). Similar directives for action were given through other channels; in a telephone conversation Herzog told Peres: "We view the upcoming NATO conference as crucial and I propose that you try to use your connections so that France and the rest of the European members active in NATO, will demand of the United States and NATO:

1) a public statement that any Soviet injury to any state in the region would be met with NATO resistance;
2) that NATO demand that in the interest of regional peace, the Egyptian army be prohibited from reinstating the base for aggression in Sinai and reimposing the blockade in the Canal and the Gulf" (see record of telephone conversation, 4 December 1956, 130.02/2459/5).

206. Message from D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to G. Mollet[1] (Paris). 11 December 1956

Copy: IMDEA 1042/65
452

Summary

Ben-Gurion expresses his gratitude to Mollet for agreeing to meet with Peres and Nahmias and his joy at the ongoing friendly relations between Israel and France. He then summarises the achievements of the war.

In order to strengthen Israel's position in negotiations with Hammarskjöld, Ben-Gurion requests France's support for Israel's demands — to prevent the resumption of Fedaiyun operations and the blockade on Israel's ships in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba or the concentration of a hostile Egyptian force on land and in the air in Sinai.

Ben-Gurion asks Mollet to explain to Dulles that fulfilment of these demands is a first and crucial step for reducing tension in the Middle East, for creating a prospect for lasting peace and for counteracting Soviet encroachment in the region. He stresses the importance of the Gulf of Aqaba as an alternative to the Suez Canal for international commerce, including oil from the Persian Gulf.

Stationing UNEF in Sinai is dependent on the consent of the Egyptian government in accordance with the Assembly resolution. As several of its units are comprised of troops from states that support Nasser, Ben-Gurion expressed his concern that evacuation of Israeli forces from the Gulf coast and the Straits of Tiran would pave the way for resumption of Egyptian control over the Gulf. Israel's stay there is the only reliable assurance for freedom of navigation in these waters.

Ben-Gurion thinks that the NATO Council should take this matter into consideration when it holds its deliberations in Paris.

Notes

1. The message to Mollet was included in a letter from Nehemia Argov to Yosef Nahmias. It should be noted that even at this phase of the political struggle, the communication channel between the Israeli prime minister and his French counterpart via the Ministry of Defence delegation in Paris continued to function.
2. Dulles arrived in Paris to participate in the NATO Council conference.
3. See no. 80.

207. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 12 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA238; Inc.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban summarises his talk with Hammarskjöld and Bunche,[1] dealing mainly with the withdrawal from Sinai. He said that now that the first phase had drawn to a close as agreed, the Israeli government was willing to take further steps. If the process progressed smoothly, the U.N. force must be prepared to assume responsibility for a great part of the Sinai Peninsula by early January.

Eban sought to clarify two cardinal questions:

1) Can the secretary-general give a confident assurance that the Egyptian army would refrain from entering Sinai along with UNEF or in its wake, so that the threat to Israel's security is not renewed?
2) Can he ensure that UNEF remain in Sinai for a fairly protracted period of time so that a broad solution could be found, or at least local solutions, such as permanent demilitarisation of Sinai?

Hammarskjöld and Bunche protested against the slow rate of the withdrawal. Regarding the assurances Eban had demanded, they said that legally speaking, that is with respect to Egyptian sovereignty, the secretary-general could not control the Egyptian army's movements in Egyptian territory. On the other hand, he accepts Eban's definition of the U.N. force's role — to forestall acts of belligerency. Eban and Kidron formed the impression that the secretary-general would not impose a total ban on entry of Egyptian troops into Sinai, but would not permit a substantial military build-up that would enable them to initiate a war. Hammarskjöld added that in any case, UNEF would serve as a buffer between Israeli and Egyptian forces. As for the U.N. force's period of service — it would stay as long as its presence was necessary to forestall renewal of hostilities.

At the secretary-general's request, the discussion also centred on the issue of blasting and demolitions in Sinai. He wanted to know whether the mine-laying affair had ended and talked about destruction of roads, villages and wells. He said that he is obliged to report to the Advisory Committee[2] not only on the rate of evacuation, but on the policy of destruction in Sinai as well. It was obvious that if he does not receive explicit assurances, he would submit a negative report to the Committee and, consequently, the General Assembly would convene to urge Israel to facilitate the entry of the U.N. force. In this case, it is obvious that the issue of Israel's refusal to withdraw its forces at an adequate rate would also arise.

Notes

1. The minutes can be found in file 93.03/3042/5.
2. See no. 73, note 2.
3. A Red Cross representative who had left for Egypt to inquire as to the fate of the Israeli prisoners of war returned empty-handed on 9 December after he had not been granted permission to visit the prisoners nor even given a list of names. Moreover, he could not arrange for the delivery of letters to and from the prisoners (see Tekoah to the Israel permanent mission to the United Nations, Tel. TBW833, 11 December 1956, 130.02/2406/9).
4. See no. 181.

208. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 12 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA239; Inc.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban transmits to Herzog his conclusions following his meeting with Hammarskjöld:[1]

1) In order to avert a major clash that would embroil Israel with the U.N., with the United States and with public opinion, he requests a most urgent telegram in reply which will include an explicit promise to stop all further demolition in Sinai. If the result of this is to forgo a few planned blasts, then so be it.
2) The issue of the rate of withdrawal. Hammarskjöld adhered to his previous stand on this issue, making no concessions: that Israel should submit a schedule for completing the evacuation of Sinai, excluding Gaza and the Gulf of Aqaba. Nevertheless, he agreed to send Burns to meet with Dayan without having received a schedule for completion of the withdrawal. Eban warns that a crisis ensuing from the tardy rate of withdrawal and the reduction of its scope may

erupt later. In a few days Israel may be forced to consider the need for speeding up the rate of evacuation.

Notes

1. See no. 207.
2. Herzog's reply to this telegram was as follows: "You can relay in writing immediately to the secretary-general that orders have been given to cease all blasts and demolitions" (see Herzog to Eban, TNWA840, 12 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12). See also no. 209.

209. A. Eban to the U.N. Secretary-General (New York). 12 December 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/3

Notes

1. See no. 207.
2. Following reception of Israel's commitment, Bunche told Eban that the letter had arrived a few hours before the Afro-Asian bloc intended to raise the issue of the blasts and the destruction that Israel had caused in Sinai at the General Assembly (see Eban to Herzog, XA149, 13 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12).

210. Editorial Note

The Government Statement on the Kafr Qasim Affair (12 December 1956)

A special session held by the Knesset was devoted entirely to the prime minister's statement on the killing of 51 Kafr Qasim residents on 29 October by a unit of the Border Police:

"I am obliged to notify the Knesset of an abominable atrocity that happened in our midst and whose essence has already been given by the government in the immediate aftermath, and later in greater detail, on reception of the report prepared by the commission of inquiry set up ad hoc immediately after the incident. On 29 October 1956, when Fedaiyun activity intensified and the Sinai Campaign commenced, a curfew was imposed in several villages on the eastern border in order to protect the lives of the villagers. Enforcement and maintenance of the curfew was assigned to a battalion of the Border Police and the residents of the villages abided by the curfew which was set between 17:00 in the evening and 06:00 the next morning. In general, the villagers complied with the curfew orders. In several

villages, a number of residents innocently returned to their homes after curfew hours and were killed by members of the Border Police. Among the victims were men, women and children.

At the moment that this horrible incident was brought to my attention on 1 November, I appointed a commission of inquiry headed by District Judge Binyamin Zohar. On 6 November the commission submitted its report to me and on the same day I issued a statement to the press on the horrible incident. In accordance with the commission's conclusions, the battalion commander [Shmuel Malinki] was brought to trial, as well as several of his subordinates who had carried out an illegal order. The report was immediately passed on to the government and it was decided to pay on account, without delay, to every stricken family a sum of 1,000 Israeli Liras. The commission of Judge Zohar was charged with determining as rapidly as possible the amount of compensation for every family of the victims. Immediately following the incident, the minister of police [Bechor Shitrit] visited the villages and expressed to the villagers and their representatives his shock and the government's shock at the horrible incident. In accordance with the commission's conclusion, which was submitted within a few days, those affected were paid sums of between 1,000 and 5,000 Israeli Liras. Obviously, it is beyond the power of any amount of money to compensate for people's lives.

I shall not commit the offence of contempt of court and so shall not state any opinion on the culpability of the suspects who were arraigned. I do, however, consider it an obligation to express on behalf of the government, on behalf of Police Headquarters, and on my personal behalf, our great consternation at the possibility of such an act of horror that assails the sacred foundations of human ethics which draws on the Law [Torah] of Israel. The Jewish people and all of mankind's best have always prided themselves — and justly so — on revering human life. 'Thou shalt not kill' is the supreme commandment bequeathed to us from Mount Sinai. There is no nation upon this earth that holds human life in reverence more than the Jewish people, namely, the life of every human being, regardless of gender, race, religion or nationality.

We have learned that a human being is created in God's image; no one knows the skin colour of Adam, who did not belong to any specific nation, but who was simply a human being. And in order not to let any doubt linger in one's heart that one ought not to discriminate between one person and another, it says in our Torah: 'And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself' [Leviticus19:33]. Not just one statute for the stranger and the citizen is required of us, but we should treat the stranger among us lovingly. The Israeli Arabs are not strangers, but essentially citizens with equal rights, whereas concerning human life, there is no significance to a person's civil status. The life of every human being is sacred. These two exalted principles have been horrendously violated in this dreadful incident, and I am certain that the

Knesset shares the feeling which I have tried to express in these words, and such a thing will never happen again in Israel. The guilty will surely receive their due punishment, and I point out with satisfaction that the heads of the assaulted villages and their families appreciated the government's position, its dismay, and its quick action in this matter."

Following the prime minister's statement, no discussion was held and all Knesset members rose to observe a minute's silence in memory of the victims in Kafr Qasim (see *Divrei HaKnesset* (Knesset Reports), Vol. XXI, 1956, p. 462).

The statement was communicated as a circular telegram to the Israel missions abroad (see Uncoded Circular Tel. 593, 13 December 1956, 130.09/2377/4).

211. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 13 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA148; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban reports on a talk with three members of the Advisory Committee,[1] at which Tov, Rafael and Kidron were also present. Eban spoke about the negotiations with Hammarskjöld and Israel's demands on the issues of Sinai, the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal. An intense and very positive discussion was held.

On the issue of the Gulf of Aqaba they were all resolute in their support of Israel. They were under the impression that the secretary-general's position on this issue is satisfactory. There was discussion as to what form the assurance that Israel is to demand should assume, and the conclusion reached was that Hammarskjöld should repeat his statement of 5 December[2] about freedom of navigation in the Gulf officially and directly at the time of the Israeli withdrawal.

On Gaza their collective opinion was inclined towards an Israeli solution rather than an international one. They hoped for great readiness on Israel's part to help with the refugee issue as the key to the problem.

They thought that Eban was expressing excessive concern over the ambiguity on the Suez issue. One committee member predicted that whoever held control over the Canal, the blockade would not be reimposed.

Their impression was that Israel would not achieve a total ban on entry of Egyptian troops into Sinai; however, strict limitations will be imposed on Egypt in this respect. They brought up the idea that at least a wide strip in the eastern region of the peninsula would be clear of troops.

After having heard all of Israel's demands, they said that as far as they could tell, the secretary-general's position did not greatly conflict with it.

Notes

1. See no. 73, note 2.
2. See nos. 182, 183.
3. See Editorial Note no. 45.

212. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 13 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA144; Outg.: 93.01/2213/6

Summary

Eban sees an opportunity in the near future to bring the issue of Egyptian Jewry before the General Assembly plenum.[1] Several delegations have promised to speak, particularly following the publication of the U.S. approach to Cairo and its expression of great alarm. In that discussion the French complaint will be examined, and perhaps the British one too,[2] and proposals will be made to dispatch observers and investigators to Egypt which will gain the support of the United States. In addition to the discussion, the delegation is weighing the options and prospects for proposing a resolution, but they will consult with the ministry before taking action.

Notes

1. See no. 170, note 3.
2. France submitted to the General Assembly a request to discuss the deportation of French citizens from Egypt and the confiscation of their belongings. Britain submitted a similar request regarding British, Maltese and Cypriot citizens (see Eban's statement at the meeting of the Israel mission to the United Nations on 12 December 1956, p. 7, 93.08/381/15). On 18 December, Britain and France tabled the issue for discussion in the General Assembly.

213. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 16 December 1956

Coded Tel. 142; Outg.: 130.09/2332/3

Summary

In light of the Fedaiyun operations in Tel Mond and Kfar Hess on the night of 15 December,[1] Tekoah stresses the importance of turning the General Assembly's attention to the continued attacks under Egyptian guidance, in violation of the 2 November resolution.

Tekoah instructs the mission to issue a letter that refers to the 3 December letter[2] and to mention in it that the Radio Cairo announcement on the stepping up of the Fedaiyun activity was translated into action instantly. The Fedaiyun launched attacks on the 3rd, 4th, 6th, 10th, and 15th of the month. The similarity between the various operations, virtually all of which were blasts using explosives or mines, should be pointed out.

Notes

1. A Fedaiyun squad which infiltrated from Jordan on the night of 15 December entered the settlement of Tel Mond in the Sharon district and blew up a two-storey building. The building's owner was buried under the rubble and killed and his wife and daughter were wounded. On the path of its retreat eastwards, the squad threw grenades into a house in Kfar Hess.
2. In a letter to the General Assembly President, Israel reported on the Egyptian threat to step up Fedaiyun activity inside Israel (see Herzog to the Israel permanent mission to the United Nations, Tel. 48, 3 December 1956, 130.16/2952/2).
   Another letter on this issue was submitted to the General Assembly on 10 December (see Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circ. Tel. 651, 24 December 1956, 130.09/2377/4).

214. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 17 December 1956

Coded Tel. TNWA884; Inc.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Following the Burns-Dayan talk,[1] Herzog believes that three to four weeks' room for manoeuvre have been gained until the withdrawal to El-Arish.[2] As well as using this period for a very extensive information campaign, Israel must decide on a clear-cut policy on both its stay in El-Arish and Sharm el-Sheikh until it receives express guarantees and its demands from the U.N. and the various governments.

The prime minister asks the delegates to hold a thorough consultation on the basis of prior directives,[4] the talks with the secretary-general, inclinations in the U.N. and their assessment of developments in Washington, and to telegraph their opinion,[5] including the unofficial proposals they think should be submitted to Bunche, at his request.[6]

Notes

1. The meeting was held at the airport in Lod and the following issues were discussed: progress of the Yugoslav forces on the Qantara–El-Arish axis; the Yugoslavs' notification about destruction of villages by the IDF; the withdrawal of IDF forces; the Santa Caterina monastery in Sinai; the posting of observers in El-Arish. A report of the meeting by M. Bar-On, Dayan's head of bureau, is in file 130.16/2952/8.
2. In early December Israel had decided on a policy of procrastination in implementing the withdrawal in Sinai. The rate determined for withdrawal was 25 kilometres per week and the government insisted on linking the withdrawal with the principal issues it had raised — the demilitarisation of Sinai, preventing it again being used as a military base that would threaten Israel and ensuring freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran. As a further measure to press Hammarskjöld to discuss these demands it was decided that the IDF would halt at the El-Arish line and stop its withdrawal, even if this resulted in a clash with the U.N. secretary-general.
   In the Burns-Dayan meeting, Burns agreed to the withdrawal rate proposed, since he still did not have at his disposal sufficient forces to deploy in lieu of the IDF (see Kidron to Herzog, XA 166, 17 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12).
3. See Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circ.Tel. 621, 17 December 1956, 130.02/2459/6.
4. No. 199.
5. See no. 217.
6. See no. 194.

215. M. Touval (Budapest) to W. Eytan. 17 December 1956

Coded Tel. 518; Inc.: 130.09/2295/13

Summary

Touval informs the Foreign Ministry that he cannot hold off presenting his credentials any longer.[2]

He still has no clear impression of the fate of the regime, which cannot exist without Soviet support. He doubts whether it will carry out in full its pledge to allow emigration; however, he maintains that whether the government stays in power or a coalition government is established, there is a good chance for emigration of substantial proportions, which cannot be envisioned if a more leftist government is established.

Notes

1. In this telegram Eytan informed Touval: "In New York they are under the impression that the Kádár regime may fall in a matter of days. If this impression is true, then it is best not to hasten to present the credentials, and at any rate, not to push for an early date to be set specially. If you present today and Kádár is overthrown tomorrow, we would be the only state to have recognised him. Recognition will be of no benefit with respect to pledges to allow emigration, should he prove unable to fulfil them" (Eytan to the Israel minister in Budapest, Tel. 608, 13 December 1956, 130.09/2295/11).
2. Touval finally presented his credentials on 18 December.

216. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 17 December 1956

Coded Circ. Tel. 614; Outg.: 130.02/2459/6

Summary

Tekoah reports on a visit by a Red Cross representative to the Israeli prisoners of war in Egypt.[1] Transfer of letters and packages was arranged.

Israel returned 22 wounded prisoners of war and relayed through the Red Cross representative in Israel who accompanied them that it was inclined to return approximately 2,500 prisoners for four Israeli ones. The representative was asked to make the overture without specifying any precise number or conditions, and to inform Egypt of Israel's willingness to return 400 civilians from Gaza as well

(of whom 100 were children), unconditionally and without receiving anything in return, and to allow these civilians to take with them their Egyptian currency and belongings and to pay compensation for their other property.

Note

1. See no. 207, note 3.

217. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 18 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA 172; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

In reply to Herzog's telegram,[1] Eban disagrees with his view that Israel has three to four weeks' room for manoeuvre until El-Arish is reached. This false impression stems from three factors, which will not last more than a few days:

1) The British withdrawal has not been completed. Upon its completion, all pressure will be directed at Israel.
2) Burns does not have sufficient forces under his command. In a short while this situation is bound to change as the U.N. force in the Canal region will be reduced, particularly after the British forces leave Port Said.
3) Burns did not know that Hammarskjöld is politically opposed to the slow rate that the former had decided on for technical reasons.[2]

Eban holds that Israel will be compelled to accelerate the rate of evacuation greatly; therefore it should speed up the process of specifying the guarantees and arrangements that it demands.[3]

Notes

1. No. 214.
2. *Ibid.*, note 2.
3. In a detailed telegram to Ben-Gurion, Eban reviewed the international background and the issues on the agenda and set out his conclusions: 1) Israel will be unable to remain on the El-Arish line after Hammarskjöld requests that it withdraw and transfer the region to the U.N. force; 2) Prior to completion of the withdrawal, Israel can only hope to receive a definition of the U.N. force's policy, functions and areas of operation. Israel cannot, at this point, determine the fate of Sinai. At best an assured period of non-belligerency can be attained, and then it could start the struggle for the next phase; 3) There is a prospect of consolidating the reality of freedom of navigation through the Gulf, of limiting the Egyptians' ability to use Sinai as a base and of preventing re-entry of Egyptian forces to Gaza. This achieved, future moves could then be planned.

Admittedly, international public opinion, particularly in the United States, is opposed to reverting to the previous situation; however, the world at large recognises Sinai as Egyptian sovereign territory. Hence Israel does not stand much chance of remaining in Sinai for long without arousing international opposition; moreover, the U.N. has only restricted ability and authority to make long-term international arrangements in Sinai.

Hammarskjöld has committed himself to introducing the U.N. force to evacuated areas in Sinai and to leaving it in place as long as the possibility of renewed clashes exists. Whether the secretary-general will fulfil these pledges cannot be predicted, nor can their effective value, but in any event, he cannot be expected to promise any more (see Eban to Ben-Gurion, XA 131, 19 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12).

218. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to G. Meir (New York). 19 December 1956

Coded Tel. 163; Outg.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Ben-Gurion informs Meir that on receiving the delegation's proposals for the policy which Israel should follow for the next few weeks he will convene the government for a consultation and send her the conclusions.

He believes that Israel will be unable to avoid a sharp confrontation with the secretary-general in the first or second week of January, and the matter will be tabled for the General Assembly's decision. The key to any stand in the U.N. General Assembly will depend on the U.S. position, thus the utmost effort must be made to obtain the support of the secretary of state and the White House.

The mission members should try to influence the U.S. congressmen and senators when they convene in January and to obtain a united and effective expression of support from U.S. Jewry.

Note

1. See no. 217.

219. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to G. Rafael (New York). 19 December 1956

Orig.: 130.02/2448/6

Summary

Herzog presents his forecasts on the approaching General Assembly sessions in late December and early January.

The immediate issue is Israel's ability to withstand pressure and to remain in Sharm el-Sheikh, Gaza, and a strip of land in Sinai until it receives concrete guarantees.

Herzog believes that if they reach a confrontation with the secretary-general in the first half of January, the General Assembly's attitude will be different from that which it adopted in November. Israel could possibly enlist a third of the U.N. member states to sabotage the demand for immediate and unconditional withdrawal.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 210. Rafael's letter has not been found; however, he also expressed his opinion on the Kafr Qasim affair in a personal telegram to Eytan and Herzog: "We have reached a state where, as a result of pogroms in Israel against Arabs, we will be unable to defend a persecuted Jewish minority with head held high and will be forced to renounce the purpose of Zionism" (see Rafael to Eytan and Herzog, Coded Tel. 157, 14 December 1956, 130.09/23332).
2. See Editorial Note no. 142.

220. D. Hammarskjöld to A. Eban (New York). 19 December 1956

Copy: 130.016/2953/12

Notes

1. When the war in Palestine ended in 1949, the Syrian army was still holding areas it had conquered west of the Jordan river and the Mandatory frontier between Israel and Syria. The Syrians agreed to withdraw from these areas only after it was decided in the armistice agreement to demilitarise them. At their demand, the question of sovereignty over the demilitarised zones remained unresolved and was left open in the armistice agreements, which stated that the question would be discussed between the parties in

a separate setting. Thus the seeds were sown for a dispute on the sovereignty over the three demilitarised zones, a dispute which continued for years.

In the framework of measures Israel took to assert its sovereignty in the central demilitarised zone, the inhabitants of the villages of al-Baqqara and al-Ghannama were deported in April 1951, some to Syria and some to Kafr Sha'ab in Israel. After the intervention of the chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organisation, an order was given to return the deportees (see Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note pp. 176–177 and nos. 234 and 246). On 1 November 1956, during the Sinai Campaign, approximately 2,000 of the villages' inhabitants were again deported to Syria and to Kafr Sha'ab.

2. The letter is cited in Tekoah's telegram to Eban, no. 443, in file 130.09/2311/9.

221. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 20 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA185; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban reports on a talk with Hammarskjöld and his staff. Hammarskjöld opposes the slow rate of withdrawal in Sinai determined at the meeting between Dayan and Burns and views it as a sign of deadlock. He rejects the chief of staff's request to allow entry of Israeli supply convoys to South Sinai through the lines of the U.N. force.

In reply to a question from Bunche on the cause of the change in the withdrawal schedule, Eban said that the political reasons are clear: the Egyptians are entering Sinai in the wake of the U.N. force, the threats from Cairo have been renewed,[4] the Fedaiyun are operating in Israel again[5] and official statements that Israeli ships would not be granted passage through the Canal are being reiterated.[6] The conditions endangering Israel's security which prevailed in October have recurred.

The secretary-general demanded urgently that Israel reconsider the question of withdrawal, since he had to give a report to the Assembly on it. He expressed his readiness to hear what exactly the assurances that Israel is seeking are. Eban said that Israel's demands are clear-cut: that the Fedaiyun not murder the population, that bases for hostile attack not be established, that no blockade be imposed on the Gulf of Aqaba and navigation rights in the Suez Canal should not be revoked.

Notes

1. The minutes are found in file 93.03/3042/6.
2. See no. 214, note 1.
3. See no. 207.

4. On 17 December Radio Cairo announced in the name of reliable sources that it was possible that Fedaiyun would infiltrate Sinai and the Negev if the IDF did not accelerate its withdrawal (see Tekoah to the Israel missions abroad, Uncoded Circ. Tel. 622, 17 December 1956, 130.09/2377/4).
5. In a telegram that Eytan sent to the Israel missions abroad he reviews the Fedaiyun operations in December. These data were intended for inclusion in a note to be presented to foreign ministries to focus attention on the renewal of Fedaiyun actions under Egyptian guidance (see Coded Circular Tel. 651, 24 December 1956, 130.09/2377/14). The notes were submitted to the State Department and to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 26 December and to the British Foreign Office on 27 December.
6. On 25 December Egyptian Foreign Minister Fawzi announced that the ban on passage of Israeli ships through the Suez Canal remained in effect and that the question would not be part of the negotiations on the Canal issue. Ali Sabri, Nasser's head of bureau, reiterated this announcement on 2 December.

222. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog and Y. Tekoah. 20 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA186; Inc.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Kidron adds to the account of the talk with Hammarskjöld.[1] The question of Gaza was also brought up. The secretary-general said that his intention had been to put Gaza aside for the time being and concentrate on the withdrawal from Sinai. The condition for this was that all parties remain silent. However, following the prime minister's statements[2] and public attention on the issue, Gaza can no longer be treated as a residual question and has become a subject of public debate. The secretary-general also mentioned the Nelson report[3] and said that in order to obtain a complete picture he had been waiting for the report from Labouisse,[4] which has just arrived. He intends to publish both reports together. It appears that the Labouisse report, among other issues, addresses the Rafah affair[5] unfavourably, and that Hammarskjöld aims to use it to balance the positive approach in the Nelson report.

Notes

1. No. 221.
2. On 19 December Ben-Gurion gave a statement in the Knesset on the issue of the future of the Gaza Strip in reply to a question from Yigal Allon. Allon asked whether Eban's statement in a radio interview in the United States that Israel did not claim the Strip for itself was the view of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and whether this statement did not contradict government policy.

Ben-Gurion stated that no one had been authorised or permitted to make any announcement on the Gaza issue on behalf of the government, except to say that Israel will not agree to the the return of the Egyptian invader to the Gaza Strip (see *Divrei HaKnesset* (Knesset Reports), Vol. XXI, 1956–1957, p. 513).

3. See no. 128, note 4.
4. Henri Labouisse, the director of UNRWA. His report, which lent itself to hostile interpretation, said that 452 people were killed by Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip. However, as the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained, the report related to the period between 26 October and 20 November 1956, i.e., including the war. Half the casualties reported were killed in the battles, and most of them were soldiers in Palestinian units attached to the Egyptian army. The number given in the Labouisse report was in keeping with its general tendency, which was strongly biased against Israel. Both reports were published by Hammarskjöld only in mid-January 1957 (see staff meeting of the Israel permanent mission to the United Nations, report, 15 January 1957, 130.02/2459/8; see also Tekoah's comments on the Labouisse report, Coded Circular Tel. 725, 15 January 1957, 93.04/328/15).
5. See no. 123.

223. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 20 December 1956

Coded Tel. 112; Inc.: 130.09/2321/4

Summary

During a talk with Elath, Lloyd asked how Israel would react to a plan to station an international force along the Israeli-Jordanian border for peacekeeping between the two countries. He added that part of this force would be stationed in Jordan and the other part in Israel, including Jerusalem. Elath replied that Israel would not consent to a foreign force on its soil. The IDF is already responsible for protecting the state, and as for the danger of Fedaiyun infiltration from Jordan, only the Jordanian authorities can prevent it. He asked how an international force could improve relations with Egypt and with the Arab governments under its influence, with Jordan among them, when Israel abides by the U.N. resolutions while Egypt views itself as exempt from them. Elath warned that any attempt to force resolutions on Israel that would cause Israeli-Egyptian relations to revert to the state they were in before the Sinai Campaign could encourage a new conflagration in the region.

Lloyd said that in New York he had told the Israeli foreign minister that Britain was interested in the demilitarisation of Sinai and the internationalisation of the islands in the Gulf of Aqaba and of the Gaza Strip.[2] They still maintain this position. He added that they mean no harm to Israel's security and that his proposal for an

international force to guard the Israeli-Jordanian border stems from the friendly feelings he harbours for Israel.

Since Lloyd was called away and the talk was abruptly cut short, Elath requested urgently from Hadow of the Levant Department, who was present, that even before his next meeting with Lloyd, the Foreign Office should approach the oil companies and show very firm support for Israel's request to increase the amount of crude oil promised to it. He also requested the Foreign Office's urgent intervention for the release of the three fighter jets and the arms and ammunition that were purchased in Britain before the ban on selling arms to Middle Eastern countries came into force.[3]

Notes

1. See no. 221, note 6.
2. See no. 160.
3. See no. 130.

224. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 21 December 1956

Coded Tel. TNW897; Outg.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

In reply to the questions raised at Hammarskjöld's meeting with Eban on 20 December,[1] Herzog communicates the answers of the Israeli government:

1) The secretary-general's reporting to the General Assembly is his own business and the government of Israel refrains from giving its opinion on the matter.
2) Out of consideration for the secretary-general's request, in his talk with Eban, to accelerate the rate of the withdrawal, the government of Israel hereby announces that the IDF has received orders to ensure that the territory west of El-Arish is evacuated during the first week of January 1957. Likewise, the Sinai peninsula will be clear of IDF forces by then. The technical arrangements for these withdrawals will be determined between the chief of staff and Burns.
3) The government of Israel wishes to know what the secretary-general has done to ensure implementation by the Egyptian government of the 2 November U.N. resolution[3] in relation to freedom of navigation, which should include navigation by Israeli ships, and whether the secretary-general is ready to take measures against renewal of the Fedaiyun threat.

4) The government of Israel wonders why the report prepared by the secretary-general's personal representatives who visited the Gaza Strip[4] has not been published.
5) Concerning the assurances that Israel is asking for — he will receive detailed proposals in the next few days.

Herzog hopes that this reply will avert an unfavourable report from the secretary-general to the General Assembly.

Notes

1. No. 221.
2. See no. 215, note 1.
3. See no. 221, note 6.

225. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 21 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA197; Inc.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

In Hammarskjöld's absence, Eban and Kidron met with Bunche and Martola.[2] Following a discussion on the details of the withdrawal to El-Arish, Eban asked the following:
1) What had been done to ensure free navigation for Israel when the Canal reopened?
2) In light of Egypt's official announcements[4] and the latest Fedaiyun operations, what had been done by the Egyptian government to put an end to these operations?
3) What was the U.N.'s policy on the conditions that would prevail in the region following the withdrawal (guarantees, etc.)?

Eban requested to meet with the secretary-general soon and receive answers to these questions. Bunche expressed his readiness to set up this meeting, but pointed out that Israel's formal relations with Egypt, in view of its having abrogated the armistice agreement, have a profound influence on this issue.

Notes

1. No. 224.
2. The minutes are in file 93.03/3042/5.
3. See no. 224.
4. See no. 221, note 4.

226. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 21 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA187; Inc.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Eban analyses the talks held with Hammarskjöld and Bunche and claims that the two were astonished at the schedule for withdrawal that Dayan had submitted to Burns on the previous day, which attested to an intention to hold on not only to Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza, but to the bulk of South Sinai. Thus, according to their estimate, Israel will hold onto two-thirds of Sinai pending early January, and the U.N. force will nowhere be stationed within less than 100 kilometres of the border. They are barely willing to agree to a withdrawal to the El-Arish line. They both stressed that if Israel does not correct this schedule, the General Assembly will convene due to the failure of the negotiations.

In consultation with the foreign minister, the following was decided:

1) Israel should state its readiness to accelerate the withdrawal process so as to prevent an immediate crisis at the General Assembly. The present situation, whereby Israel still holds 80 percent of the territory in Sinai six weeks after the commitment for withdrawal had been made, is a situation that cannot be defended in the Assembly. A statement should be made on the withdrawal from Sinai as far as the El-Arish line until the first week of January, with the exception of Sharm el-Sheikh.
2) A final and decisive discussion must be started immediately on the guarantees to be given by the secretary-general for freedom of navigation, the activities to be undertaken by the U.N. force in Sinai to prevent aggression and prevention of an Egyptian return to Gaza.

Notes

1. No. 225.
2. See no. 207.
3. See no. 79.
4. See no. 214.
5. See no. 227.
6. Eban's telegram was received after the government's decision on expediting the evacuation had already been sent. See no. 224 above.

227. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 22 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA249; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban summarises his talks with Bunche:

1) Bunche had expressed his personal opinion that from what the secretary-general says on the Gulf of Aqaba and Sinai, it can be inferred that so long as the U.N. force is in place, there will be no disturbance of freedom of navigation, nor will a serious presence of Egyptian forces be established in Sinai. Besides the new security status in Gaza, a modus vivendi is emerging. Bunche maintains that the U.N. force's stay would not be brief.
2) The U.N. force is merely a means for "buying time." During this intermission, when no belligerency was possible, vigorous political activity was required to arrive at a settlement; if not permanent agreements, then at least security arrangements. Bunche holds that it is in Israel's interest to enter this period of clarification immediately.
3) The Americans have told the secretary-general that they will make it clear to Nasser that freedom of navigation in Suez applies to Israel as well. Hammarskjöld's position on this is firm.
4) For exactly this reason it is extremely important that Israel clarify the legal status following the prime minister's statement on the abrogation of the armistice agreement.[2] Bunche advises them to explain to the secretary-general that Israel does not advocate belligerency as the legal basis for Israeli-Egyptian relations. He warned that if it neglects to do so, it would weaken itself, as well as other parties, when the time comes for the struggle on lifting the blockade in Suez and against its reimposition in the Gulf.

Notes

1. The letter in question is probably Hammarskjöld's to Eban from 6 December. See no. 189; also see no. 194.
2. In his address to the Knesset on 7 November. See Editorial Note no. 69.

228. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 22 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA200; Outg.: 90.01/2213/13

Summary

In a talk with Kidron, Bunche attempted to interpret Hammarskjöld's statement at the General Assembly,[1] which contained criticism of Israel. Nevertheless, Bunche argued that Israel and the secretary-general will be required to cooperate on the negotiations, and therefore the formal and chilly atmosphere presently prevailing should be dispelled. The next phase will require good will, mutuality and sharing of thoughts. Kidron pledged full cooperation.

Notes

1. See the secretary-general's Statement before the General Assembly on 21 December 1956, in file 130.02/2459/7. Also see GAOR, 11th session, Plenary Meeting, 21 December 1956, pp. 813–814.
2. Hammarskjöld gave the statement in response to questions that al-Rifai, Jordan's representative to the U.N., had presented to him. In it he stressed that before Israel's announcement on the evacuation of the area west of El-Arish, it had submitted a different proposal that was unacceptable to him. Hammarskjöld stated that completion of Israel's withdrawal would take place on an "undefined date" and added that later in the process the Israeli forces would reach the armistice demarcation line (see Eban to Herzog, NWTA 246, 22 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12).
3. No. 225.

229. Meeting: D. Ben-Gurion — E. Lawson (Tel Aviv, 22 December 1956)

Diary Note: B.G. Archives

Summary

In a talk with Lawson, Ben-Gurion asked what the U.S. position was on the issues of freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal, guarantees of freedom of navigation through the Gulf of Aqaba and prevention of a return to the status quo in Sinai or of the establishment of bases for attack there. He also wanted to know the reason for the discriminatory attitude adopted by the U.N., which did not insist on implementation of resolutions that obligate Nasser — ensuring freedom of

navigation and discontinuing acts of hostility — while Israel alone was obliged to abide by the resolutions of the General Assembly.

He told Lawson that Israel wishes to coordinate its policy with that of the United States as far as possible, while protecting its vital interests,[1] but it is uncertain what U.S. policy is. It is therefore desirable that Eban meet with Dulles[2] this week to clarify these issues prior to the withdrawal to El-Arish. In Israel there is growing opposition to further withdrawal in view of resumption of the Fedaiyun operations by Egypt (albeit from Jordan) and the announcement of the Egyptian government that it will not grant freedom of navigation to Israel.[3]

Notes

1. See *FRUS 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 636, n. 6, p. 1248.
2. The telegram from Herzog reporting to Eban on this discussion stated: "[The prime minister] expressed his hope that you will be given an opportunity for clarification with the secretary of state, as we wish to coordinate our policy with the United States, as far as possible, and we operated independently only because we faced what was a life-and-death situation for us" (see Tel. 780, 23 December 1956, 130.09/2311/10).
3. See no. 221, note 6. See also Lawson's report on his talk with Ben-Gurion, *FRUS 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 663, pp. 1326–1328.

230. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 23 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA250; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Following the talks with Hammarskjöld and Bunche,[1] Eban is of the opinion that Israel has two weeks at most to decide whether to complete the withdrawal from Sinai, or to stand firm and to halt the withdrawal pending reception of concrete guarantees against Egyptian attack from Sinai. As he had already said in his previous telegram,[2] Eban again stresses that every effort should be made to obtain a commitment from the U.N. for the prevention of the establishment of a substantial Egyptian military presence in Sinai. However, whether they succeed or not, there is no evading the evacuation of El-Arish in January.

Eban lists the factors and arguments for this. He again specifies the assurances that Israel will try to obtain as prerequisites for withdrawal in Sinai, in the Gulf of Aqaba, in Gaza, in the Suez Canal and against renewal of the Fedaiyun operations.

Notes

1. See no. 228.
2. Referring to Eban's telegram of 19 December; see no. 218, note 3.
3. See no. 227.
4. Obscure word in the original text.

231. L. Eshkol (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 23 December 1956

Coded Tel. 118; Outg.: 130.02/2459/7

Summary

Eshkol notifies the embassy that following a consultation, a course of action for further handling of the oil pipeline issue has been agreed:

1) First and foremost, pressure should be exerted on France towards taking a decision in principle to lay the pipe, as well as a decision on the form, timing and place of technical, financial and legal negotiations.
2) Israel continues to support the laying of a 30–32 inch pipe, which would be capable of transferring up to 25 million tons per year, as the most rational and economic solution with regard to amount and price.
3) If, for reasons of time or reducing the investment, the French prefer a pipe of smaller diameter, Eshkol offers several alternatives for that as well.

Since close contacts have been formed between the Ministry of Defence staff and their French counterparts, Eshkol wishes, for the benefit of the plan, to use all contacts, to call on the aid of the Ministry of Defence staff and to work together on this matter.

Note

1. See no. 248.

232. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 23 December 1956

Coded Circ. Tel. 640; Outg.: 130.09/2377/4

Summary

The East European division informs the missions that on 21 December the Soviet Foreign Ministry approached the Moscow embassy with an urgent request to issue a visa for Ambassador Abramov so that he could resume his post.

The division assesses the advantages that this move offers:

1) This surprising move is undoubtedly a positive one, although it is still too early to interpret it as a crucial turn-around in the relations between the two countries.
2) With Abramov's arrival possibilities for contact with the Soviets will increase, in Israel and all the more so in Moscow, where Avidar has been left in a state of isolation.
3) His return will strengthen the weak political and economic ties with several of the satellite countries, such as Romania and Bulgaria, and enable further improvement of relations with Poland and Hungary.
4) The division staff hopes that the Soviet move will have a beneficial effect on relations with Yugoslavia, and could possibly even strengthen Israel's status in Asia.
5) The return of the Soviet ambassador will somewhat improve Israel's status in the West.

The division attempts to explain the circumstances that have brought about this move by the Soviet Union.

Abramov's return shows that the course of action that Israel has taken with the Soviet Union since the crisis erupted was correct — a firm but not provocative stand, moderate but respectful. Israel's response to the Soviet threats of elimination, as evident in the prime minister's messages to Bulganin,[1] was calm and reflected self-confidence.

This serves as an important lesson in anticipation of further tests of relations with the Soviet Union.

Note

1. Nos. 83, 121.

233. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 23 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA25; Inc.: 93.01/2213/6

Summary

Eban reports on his talk with Nehru in New York.[1]

Eban attempted to analyse the negative and illogical nature of the Arabs' animosity toward Israel and voiced his opinion that it originates in deep-rooted emotional factors, rather than in objective differences. Hence the importance of an independent Asian position in the U.N. and avoidance of blind following of Arab extremism, which only pushes peace further away.

In addition, Eban pointed out the importance of India's constantly urging the Arabs of the need to accept Israel's sovereignty, hence the vital necessity for improving relations between India and Israel and for Indian opposition to the exclusion of Israel from the group of Asian states.

The essence of Nehru's response:

The Arab stance is, indeed, irrational, but precisely because it is emotional at its core, it is very resistant to rapid modification or to influence by logical argument.

India has not abandoned its aspiration to bring Israel and the Arab world closer, but cannot do much in this respect at this tense moment. Krishna Menon had made it clear to the U.N. that India does not support the Arab position, which denies Israel's existence. Touching on the subject of the U.N. force, Nehru said Hammarskjöld is in charge of this issue, but stated clearly that the Indian force would not stay in the region against the wish of the host country.

He avoided any comment on Israel-India relations and Eban skirted direct discussion of them as well.

Note

1. Nehru arrived in the United States to meet with President Eisenhower. The Nehru-Eban talk took place on 19 December on the initiative of the Indian ambassador to Washington and was intended for discussion of ways to achieve peace in the Middle East.

234. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 24 December 1956

Coded Tel. TNWA913; Outg.: 130.02/2459/14

Summary

Herzog disagrees with Eban's assertions in telegrams 173,[1] 172,[2] as to ensuring the U.N. force's stay in Sinai. He fears that the force will be evacuated when Nasser demands it. Therefore he proposes that Israel demand a clear-cut commitment on the duration of the force's stay on the coast of the Gulf of Aqaba, for instance three years, should no other arrangement be reached which would ensure the freedom of navigation. Awareness of the international hazards inherent in a clash with the U.N. should not distract Israel from the possibility that the IDF may evacuate Sharm el-Sheikh on the basis of an ambiguous promise by the secretary-general. He could then break that promise, the blockade would be reimposed, and Israel would not forgive itself for not even having tried to prevent it.

Israel could not threaten another war, in view of the complications and dangers that arose in the Sinai Campaign, and the fact that it would have to go to war on its own, after it had been proven that it could not withstand international pressure. Herzog casts doubt on the notion that any substantial financial body would start to lay an oil pipeline so long as freedom of navigation was not ensured beyond all doubt. He maintains that on this critical issue, Israel must do some serious soul-searching and be willing to fight to the last.

Notes

1. The telegram has not been found.
2. See no. 217.
3. No. 129.
4. No. 230.
5. No. 227.
6. The telegram has not been found.

235. Statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in a Special Meeting of the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations (New York). 24 December 1956

Minutes: 93.08/381/15

Summary

Foreign Minister Meir addressed Hammarskjöld's status at the General Assembly and in the eyes of various countries, as well as his attitude towards Israel. During the course of negotiations, Hammarskjöld had said things that could be construed to mean that Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh would be left to a later stage. The foreign minister does not believe that he meant it and doubts his integrity and friendship. The opinions he has expressed of late show that he has no restraint when it comes to Israel. The indications for this include the fact that the report on Egyptian Jewry has yet to be published and the Nelson report has also not yet been published, whereas the Labouisse report[1] has and the secretary-general intends to put them together. On 21 December he ordered a question from the Jordanian delegate and answered it,[2] in clear collusion with the Arabs, without prior notice to Israel.

During the entire period that he submitted reports to the Security Council, he never said a word denouncing any Arab country whatsoever, for instance pointing out Nasser's refusal to allow Israeli ships freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and Jordan's non-compliance with Article VIII. [3] This is not to say that he cannot be negotiated with: whatever can be salvaged should be salvaged, but it should also be clear that he will make demands unacceptable to Israel. Israel cannot evacuate Sharm el-Sheikh and retreat to the armistice demarcation lines without a single word on assurances. Its situation is different from that of the British or French; by withdrawing from Suez, they would face losing certain economic interests, whereas Israel, by withdrawing, would endanger its security.

The United States alone could change Hammarskjöld's position; he would not dare go against Washington.

Negotiations with Hammarskjöld aside, the American Jewish leaders should be made aware that Israel may clash openly with the General Assembly. At the very least, the Jewish leadership and non-Jewish friends should be made ready as far as possible.

In conclusion, the foreign minister agreed with the opinion of the delegates who held that Israel must not demand a resolution on peace from the Assembly which might be in its disfavour. The present moment is the least favourable for any real steps towards peace. In spite of this, Israel has posed four questions to Egypt,[5] in the answer to which everything is included. Does Nasser believe that he is in a state of war with Israel? Will he continue with the Fedaiyun operations? Will he

maintain the blockade? Will he maintain the boycott? Cairo gave a prompt reply to two of the questions: 1) that no Israeli ship will pass through Suez; 2) that a plan has been completed for Fedaiyun operations.[6] Hammarskjöld has still provided no answer. If he has received negative replies from Nasser, he should present them to the Assembly. The threat to resume the debate should not be a cause for alarm; Israel would have its say.

On the issue of the Gazan refugees, it is the opinion of the foreign minister (without committing the government) that it would be fair if, along with leaving the territory under Israel's control, Israel would be compelled to contribute its share by accepting some of the refugees. The minister suggests not going beyond this formula; Israel has never been asked to receive 200,000 refugees.

The armistice agreement — if Nasser will give a commitment to fulfil the entire agreement, the foreign minister would recommend to the government to accept the agreement in its entirety. This means no blockade in Suez or Aqaba, no boycott, and no Fedaiyun operations.

Notes

1. See no. 222.
2. See no. 228.
3. In Article VIII of the armistice agreement with Jordan it was laid down that a special committee be appointed whose task would be to formulate and improve the armistice arrangements for issues which had not been resolved, among them free access to the Holy Places.
4. The discussion following the foreign minister's statement was omitted here.
5. See no. 49.
6. See no. 213. On 24 December, following a series of Fedaiyun attacks in various areas in Israel, Radio Cairo announced that the Arab governments were training the Fedaiyun and instilling in them readiness to fight; this undertaking was legal and added to the glory of the governments of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and other states (see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circ. Tel. 656, 25 December 1956, 130.16/2952/2).

236. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 25 December 1956

Coded Tel. [791]; Outg.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Ben-Gurion disagrees with Eban's conclusions in the latter's telegrams, nos. 181[1] and 250.[2]

A distinction should be made between the future of Sinai and the area of El-Arish, Sharm el-Sheikh and the Gaza Strip. All four commitments made by Hammarskjöld in telegram 181 are meaningless. The determining factors are:

1) Israel's action;
2) The position of the United States;
3) The U.N. resolution.

Ben-Gurion believes that approaches to the secretary-general should be kept to a minimum; the Assembly should be addressed directly, should the need arise. Egypt's violation of the United Nations Charter over the years should be attacked at the General Assembly and in the press, as well as its imposition of blockade, boycott, and operation of the Fedaiyun, which means further acts of hostility.

In a talk with Dulles, it was necessary to insist on the following points:

1) Non-return to the status quo ante.
2) Demilitarisation of the eastern part of Sinai.
3) The vital necessity for Israel to remain in Sharm el-Sheikh, pending its reception of concrete, effective guarantees for non-violation of the freedom of navigation through the Straits and in the Red Sea (a commitment made by the United States, rather than one made by the secretary-general or the General Assembly).

   Dulles should be told that Nasser disregarded both the Constantinople Convention and the U.N. General Assembly resolutions when he imposed the blockade on Israeli navigation, and would continue to show such disregard. In accordance with the General Assembly resolution, the U.N. force cannot remain on Egyptian territory against Nasser's will. Dulles must therefore understand that without being absolutely assured of its freedom of navigation, Israel cannot withdraw.
4) Egypt must not be allowed to return to the Gaza Strip. The Strip should not be officially annexed; however, Israel's security necessitates that it be free of any Egyptian military or U.N. force presence. The latter would not prevent organisation and operation of the Fedaiyun. Israel will ensure civil services (economic, public, and educational) for the regular residents of Gaza and will not object to U.N. supervision in some form (without assuming a mandate). Israel will consult with the United States on a solution to the refugee problem in general and in Gaza in particular.

Notes

1. No. 214.
2. No. 230.

237. A. Eban (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion. 25 December 1956

Coded Tel. WIA75; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Eban agrees with Ben-Gurion[1] that Israel should concentrate on the Straits and the Gaza Strip, that is, on the issues of freedom of navigation and non-return of Egypt to Gaza. He takes it upon himself to tell Dulles that for Israel, everything depends on these two issues.

Eban does, however, have reservations on Ben-Gurion's conclusions about Hammarskjöld. He believes that Hammarskjöld cannot be taken out of the picture, as the United States is determined to operate through him. His present status is so central that clashing with him entails clashing with both the United States and the United Nations. Eban is unsure whether the United States would be willing to circumvent him and regard itself as the official address for assurances and commitments.

The next moves will be a talk with Dulles and putting questions to Hammarskjöld on assurances.

Notes

1. No. 236.
2. See no. 182.
3. At the end of December Shiloah returned to Israel in order to report personally to Ben-Gurion about developments in Washington and at the U.N. and to receive information and instructions in preparation for the resumption of the General Assembly session at the beginning of January.

238. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 25 December 1956

Coded Tel. TNW922; Outg.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

According to Ben-Gurion's directives and following his telegram to Eban,[1] Herzog gives guidelines for Israel's political activity in the coming weeks:

1) Submitting questions to the secretary-general, while attempting to bring him to widen the scope of his commitments. Without dwelling on the value of the commitments he would be willing to make in writing, they would certainly have political and propaganda value in the general campaign.
2) Apart from the activity at the State Department, everything should be done to bring senators and congressmen, as well as public opinion in general, to demand that the State Department show understanding for Israel's stand on Sharm el-Sheikh, Gaza, and the demilitarisation of Sinai — at the very least, of Eastern Sinai. Emphasis should be placed on freedom of navigation in the Gulf (i.e., that the United States take action to secure this), as well as on Gaza. Certainly a supreme effort must be made to bring U.S. Jewry to make vigorous and united demands from the State Department.
3) Extensive public awareness campaigns in Europe, Latin America, and Asia, particularly in relation to freedom of navigation in the Gulf.
4) An endeavour to consolidate a group of states at the U.N. to stand by Israel in the demand for a concrete assurance on freedom of navigation. Perhaps it will be willing to foil imposition of sanctions by the U.N. regarding Israel's refusal to withdraw from Sharm el-Sheikh unless it receives a concrete assurance.
5) Delivering notes to various states regarding freedom of navigation in the Gulf, while pointing out the difficulty of evacuation without a concrete assurance against reimposition of the blockade.
6) They must consider when to declare Israel's position on both the Gulf and Gaza publicly. On the one hand, it is preferable that the position be made clear to international public opinion prior to the clash at the U.N.; on the other hand, if Israel makes the announcement now, the secretary-general may state that he cannot carry on discussions.

The prime minister requests that the foreign minister and Eban hold a secret consultation with the mission without delay in relation to the above and telegraph their opinion[3] along with detailed proposals.

Notes

1. No. 236.
2, No. 230.
3. On the same day, Meir sent her opinion to Herzog through Shiloah: "My thoughts are similar to yours. Indeed, I have stressed and am still stressing that the condition for a stronger stand is to assume that the outcome may be severe, even if a prospect of understanding is possible, and to determine to what extent we are willing and able to suffer the consequences. My opinion is that if it becomes evident that the choice is between reverting to the pre-war state or standing firm and suffering for it, the latter should be chosen. However, this reckoning should be done thoroughly at home" (see Meir to Herzog, Tel. 212, 25 December 1956, 130.02/2459/1).

239. M. Kidron (New York) to W. Eytan. 25 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA 205; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Kidron responds negatively to Eytan's proposal to transfer the Gaza Strip to Israeli trusteeship.[1]

It is doubtful if the U.N. would recognise Israel's legal right to transfer the Strip to its trusteeship. Its stay in Gaza is not recognised by the Assembly as legal occupation.

Trusteeship entails an annual report to the Trusteeship Council, annual enquiry by this Council, commissions of enquiry and incessant intervention in general. Kidron doubts the advisability of this undertaking.

Trusteeship by an Arab country would be considered by the U.N. as much more logical than Israeli trusteeship. Should Israel propose trusteeship, it would invite a claim for Arab trusteeship.

Note

1. In this telegram, Eytan had proposed Israeli trusteeship over the Gaza Strip, based on the United Nations Charter, article 77(c) (see Eytan to the Israel permanent mission to the United Nations, Tel. 173, 13 December 1956, 130.09/2332/3).

240. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 25 December 1956

Coded Tel. TNW 918; Outg.: 130.09/2339/7

Summary

In reply to Kidron's arguments against Israeli trusteeship in the Gaza Strip,[1] Eytan lists several advantages of his proposal:

In the absence of any other practical proposal, it may possibly even be accepted with enthusiasm.

Israel's proposal to convene a conference for discussing the refugees' future will create a favourable political atmosphere for delivering the trusteeship into its hands.

Trusteeship is a form of government recognised, even preferred, by the U.N. Any other international solution would be inferior to it.

Precisely the fact that trusteeship entails some supervision by the U.N. may facilitate acceptance of the plan.

From Israel's standpoint, it offers an enormous advantage, as trusteeship would ensure its total control without having to grant citizenship to all the region's inhabitants.

As everyone is seeking a solution, they would be tempted by such a plan, which can be limited to five or ten years. It can be laid down that a referendum would be held in ten years, should this be required for further persuasion.

Since Israel sees great urgency in setting out a realistic plan for Gaza, Eytan requests the mission to hold a consultation immediately on the trusteeship proposal. He holds that it should be dismissed only in the event that a more effective realistic proposal is made.

Note

1. No. 239.

241. M. Touval (Budapest) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the East European Division. 25 December 1956

Coded Tel. 529; Inc.: 130.09/2295/13

Summary

Touval reports on his talk with Deputy Foreign Minister Sebes on the options for emigration from Hungary.[1]

Sebes affirmed his government's readiness to allow emigration and said that he believes that in January approximately a thousand Jews would be able to leave for Israel. The age restrictions imposed on emigrants would not hold for those going to Israel. He requested that an effort be made to carry out the emigration quietly.

Touval pledged Israel's readiness to channel the emigrants through Yugoslavia or send them by air and said that the mere fact that substantial emigration has commenced would calm the Jews and they would await their turn. He expressed his readiness to recommend that in the agreement between Israel and Hungary, precedence would be given, as far as possible, to merchandise that they require.[2]

The talk was held in a very friendly atmosphere. With the utmost caution, Touval is starting to envisage mass immigration from Hungary to Israel.

Notes

1. See no. 173, note 1. On the beginning of immigration from Hungary see no. 346 below.
2. A trade agreement with Hungary was signed in January 1949 and Israel had viewed it from the beginning as a means for influencing the scope of Jewish immigration from this country. Trade relations between the two countries were disrupted during the rift with the Eastern bloc in 1953. A new agreement was signed in February 1954 and another in June 1956.

242. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban. 26 December 1956

Coded Tel. 927; Outg.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Herzog reports on differences of opinion at the meeting between Dayan and Burns with regard to the line of withdrawal at El-Arish and to the supply routes to Sharm el-Sheikh.

He relays the prime minister's request to explain to Hammarskjöld or to Bunche that Dayan's proposal complies with Israel's commitment to the secretary-general from 21 December, that following the first week of January, the area west of El-Arish would be evacuated and similarly the bulk of Sinai would be clear of IDF forces.[1]

With respect to the technical arrangements, it has been decided that they will be worked out between the chief of staff and Burns; indeed, the prime minister was surprised that Eban discussed these matters with the secretary-general and his staff, not to mention the fact that they are not familiar with the territory and with the IDF's requirements.

Notes

1. No. 224.
2. No. 226.
3. Eban was annoyed at the "tone of exaggerated criticism" in Herzog's telegram, especially considering the immense efforts he had made at the U.N. to buy precious time for Israel (see Eban to Herzog, XA228, 28 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12). Herzog replied by saying that the directive given should not be construed as lack of appreciation for Eban's efforts in the United States and at the U.N., or for his conduct of negotiations with the secretary-general. The intention was to help him to withstand the pressure put on him from all directions by avoiding going into technical issues (see Herzog to Eban, TNWA 941, 30 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12).

243. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 26 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWTA226; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

In a talk he held with Eban, Bunche emphasised the points that had already been agreed on with Israel:

1) Locations in Sinai which lie west of the El-Arish line southward will all be evacuated by 7 January.
2) According to the plan for evacuation, most of Sinai will be in U.N. hands by 7 January.

Bunche said that he will direct Burns to implement the stages on which there is a consensus. Eban encouraged this inclination in order to avoid the impression of a crisis.

Furthermore, as a personal comment, Bunche remarked that each time Israel argues for holding onto territories in order to maintain the connection with Sharm el-Sheikh, the secretary-general and Martola respond by presenting the demand to evacuate Sharm el-Sheikh, even though, for other reasons, the secretary-general prefers to postpone handling this issue as much as possible. Bunche suggests not precipitating the issue by depicting Sharm el-Sheikh as the reason for holding onto half of the Sinai desert.

Eban fears that Israel would face a difficult situation if the plan it proposes does not fulfil the abovementioned condition.

244. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban. 26 December 1956

Coded Tel. TNW928; Outg.: 130.02/2459/1

Summary

Herzog maintains, as he has already written,[2] that efforts should be made to extract the maximum commitments possible from the secretary-general. Parallel to negotiations with him, the essential nature of freedom of navigation and the fact that Israel could not withdraw without concrete guarantees should be instilled in international public opinion, particularly in the United States.

In the next phase, the Afro-Asian bloc and the Soviets will attempt to impose sanctions on Israel, and foiling this scheme will depend on the position of other European, Latin American and Asian states, and chiefly of the United States. The

only way to enlist the latter's involvement is to persuade the State Department that Israel will resist fiercely on this issue, which could eventually cause a renewed conflagration. Concurrently, a vigorous claim should be made by various circles in Congress and in the Senate and by public opinion that the United States should take real action to ensure freedom of navigation in the Gulf, instead of merely urging Israel to withdraw.

Herzog suggests that Eban draft a brief aide mémoire on the Gulf issue to be submitted to U.N. delegations, which will also be transmitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Foreign Ministries in the various capitals. In addition, thousands of letters from the Seamen's Union and the Chamber of Commerce in Israel are being compiled for delivery to their counterpart organisations worldwide. Herzog expects the Israeli representatives to arrange for serious action to be taken by American Jewry, as well as by the congressmen and senators when they convene in Washington.

Notes

1. In this telegram, Eban discusses Israel's chances of obtaining assurances of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba from the U.N. secretary-general and from the United States (see Eban to Herzog, WIA 76, 25 December 1956, 93.01/2213/12).
2. No. 238.

245. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 26 December 1956

Uncoded Circular Tel. 622; Outg.: 130.09/2377/4

Summary

In his reply to the Herut party's motion for the Knesset agenda, the prime minister rejected the assumption that Eisenhower's note from 8 November[1] compels Israel's forces to return to the armistice demarcation lines. Concerning Gaza, Ben-Gurion said that he does not believe a discussion on this issue would be of any public benefit. As long as no other decision had been reached, no authorised person was permitted to announce anything other than what he himself had said in the Knesset in reply to Yigal Allon's question[2] on the declarations made by Abba Eban in the United States.

Notes

1. No. 79.
2. See no. 222, note 2.
3. See *Divrei Haknesset* (Knesset Reports), Vol. XXI, 1956–1957, p. 555.

246. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division. 26 December 1956

Coded Tel. 351; Inc.: 130.09/2347/2

Summary

In a conversation with Pineau, Tsur said that following the evacuation of the British and the French forces from Port Said, the U.N. was bringing all its weight to bear on Israel. Tsur requested not only France's support, but that it exert its pressure and influence on all its allies as well. Pineau said that with regard to France, this should prove simple enough. They accept Israel's demands and will champion them, and will even enlist the Belgians' help, as well as that of other European nations. However, he has apprehensions about the British, who are uncooperative and are opposed to Israel's stay in Gaza.

The French government has no information on the U.S. position. The talks held with Dulles were friendly in nature but nonbinding and he refrained from taking a stand on the Middle East issue. Ambassador Alphand had left for the United States in order to find out its position. But in a conversation with Rountree he was told that the United States had yet to define its stand — even on the issue of clearing the Suez Canal — in spite of clear promises made to France and Britain.

Direct pressure from the Soviet Union is not to be expected. There is danger that economic measures would be taken, particularly an oil embargo, and France is prepared to help, if this should be the case.

Tsur expressed his disappointment with the slow progress made both on oil from Iran and on the pipeline. Pineau was surprised to learn that these matters had reached a standstill and said that the French government had taken an explicit decision on France's participation in the laying of the temporary pipeline.[4] He knows about the oil companies' objection and is not intimidated.

Notes

1. The text of the note is in the telegram from Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circular Tel. 651, 24 December 1956, 130.09/2377/4. In the note several serious Fedaiyun attacks in December were described and previous appeals by Israel to the U.N. on this matter were mentioned.
2. Speaking in the French National Assembly on 18 December during a discussion on foreign policy, Pineau listed three crucial conditions on which France was insisting for resolving the Middle East crisis: internationalisation of the Gaza Strip, freedom of passage for Israeli ships through the Suez Canal and freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. As a means for resolving the oil crisis he mentioned the laying of pipelines from Iraq to Turkey and from Eilat to Haifa (see the Israel embassy in Paris to the West European division, Tel. 323, 19 December 1956, 130.02/2459/6).
3. Raymond Wheeler, head of the U.N. team supervising the clearing of the Suez Canal.
4. On 25 December, Nehemia Argov, on behalf of Peres, informed Ben-Gurion of the French government's decision to finance the difference in cost between an 8-inch pipe and a 16-inch pipe (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 25 December 1956; see also Bartur to Tsur, Tel. 139, 1 January 1956, 130.09/2347/5).

247. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Bartur. 26 December 1956

Orig.: 93.02/194/3

Summary

Tsur remarks on the difficulties caused by the duplication inherent in the activity of the Israeli embassy and the Ministry of Defence's representatives in Paris.

Relations between the latter and the French Ministry of Defence are very close and the French minister of defence wields considerable influence in the government. Thus the Ministry of Defence representatives call on their French friends for furthering plans. However at times diplomatic contacts are held of which the embassy knows nothing. The French officials may be hostile but they are also very powerful and can even frustrate government decisions. It would be imprudent to capitalise on one line of action while forsaking all others.

As for the oil pipeline — the French government is undoubtedly interested in both the temporary pipe and the large diameter pipe. Still, talk of the pipe was intended more for propaganda purposes and to impress public opinion than for actual execution. The details of the two plans and the differences between them are unclear to them. On the other hand, heavy pressure is being exerted on the government against the pipeline plan. This pressure originates on the one hand in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which fears another rift with the Arab states,

and on the other in the French oil companies, particularly the directorate of C.F.P. (Compagnie Française de Pétrole), which fears that this could harm the oil supply from the Arab states. Nevertheless, Tsur believes that eventually the joint plan will be carried out, because the pipeline is essential to France, both in terms of internal politics and future oil supply. He expects that the Lazard investment bank will take part in the plan for the large diameter pipe.

He suggests keeping publicity surrounding the pipeline to a minimum, both in France and in Israel. Any public activity intensifies apprehension and serves those undermining the plan.

Notes

1. There were actually two aides mémoire composed by Bartur on these dates which dealt with the oil pipeline plan and with consolidation of a unified Western European position on the Middle East. They were both sent on 24 December, along with a letter by Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, which were requested to hold talks in the spirit of these aides mémoire with relevant people and circles inside and outside the government. (The aides mémoire are in file 93.08/418/6).
2. Maurice Lemaire, the junior minister of commerce and industry.
3. See no. 246, note 2. See reporting on this discussion in Bendor's telegram to the West European division, no. 329, 24 December 1956, 130.09/2347/2.
4. Bartur proposed that Israel express its readiness to give the oil pipeline an international or general Western European character in terms of ownership and legal status; that assurances be given that a pipeline which is to serve crucial Western European interests would be "isolated" from politics and that Israel would refrain from using it as an instrument of national policy, and that its operation would remain in the hands of its builders and owners in collaboration with Israel. The granting of this status to the pipeline would serve as an important precedent for demanding that Egypt grant a similar status to the Suez Canal. See also Bartur to Shek, Tel. 586, 20 December 1956, 130.09/2321/3.

248. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division. 27 December 1956

Coded Tel. 364; Inc.: 130.09/2347/2

Summary

In a talk he held with Tsur, Mollet affirmed that the French government had decided to get involved in the pipeline project but had no answer as to whether this meant the large pipe or the temporary one, or whether government participation or private

capital was involved. He stressed that the decision was taken in spite of counter-pressure from the oil companies and that it had been decided to sign a contract with Iran for supply of oil, contrary to their opinion.

Tsur demanded that in order to speed up execution of the plan, a committee be appointed including three representatives from the government offices involved, which would leave immediately for Israel, without any publicity, for negotiations and for reaching a fundamental decision. Mollet accepted the idea.

Tsur expressed Israel's concern over the expected pressure from the United States and the U.N. to withdraw. In his reply Mollet was no more optimistic than Pineau.[3] He did say, however, that France does not pose a problem in that respect. At the latest government meeting an explicit decision had been taken to support Israel in its struggle and his government would back Israel in all respects. It would vote with Israel in the U.N. and, if need be, would also help it financially. But the overall picture is bleak. Britain has more and more reservations and from the beginning had avoided any step that had to do with support for Israel. As for the United States, the situation is fraught with uncertainty. Mollet will enlist all the support he possibly can, and relies on Spaak, on Adenauer, and on Greece, as well as on the Italians, whose outlook is closer to that of the French. However he has no illusions and knows that once the General Assembly is convened in January, Israel would face a major attack.

At the end of the talk they also discussed the French Socialist delegation's visit to Israel.[5]

Notes

1. See no. 246, note 2.
2. See no. 246.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Douglas Dillon, the American ambassador to France.
5. The delegation arrived in Israel for a friendly visit and to inquire about possibilities for economic, political, and scientific cooperation between the two countries. Its members were prominent figures in the French Socialist Party, most of them members of its central committee: Pierre Commin, acting party secretary and a member of the Senate; Pierre Métayer, secretary of state in the Prime Minister's office; Joseph Begarra, head of the French Socialist Section in the Socialist Union Council; J. Marzoraty, former secretary of the Socialist Student International and Robert Patillon, the party's secretary for international affairs. The delegation met with Ben-Gurion on 22 December. On the visit, see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 22 December 1956.

249. Israel Legation in Bucharest to the East European Division. 27 December 1956

Coded Tel. 681; Inc.: 130.09/2297/4

Summary

Since the Romanians have not permitted any emigration for two months and in light of recent developments in Poland and Hungary,[1] the Israeli minister proposes that he request a meeting with Rudencu[2] and present him with a demand for mass emigration. In addition, he would try to put this claim to government members and in talks with the Russians.

The main reason for this state of affairs in Romania is its complete subordination to the Soviet Union, the intransigent political line and the old Stalinist officials. However, even if current conditions are unfavourable, the issue must still be broached.

Notes

1. See no. 241.
2. The Romanian deputy minister of foreign affairs.

250. M. Tov (New York) to W. Eytan. 27 December 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/3

Notes

1. The letter has not been found.
2. In this telegram Tov specifies the difficulties in enlisting sympathy and support from the Latin American countries for Israel's demands (see Tov to Eytan, XA192, 21 December 1956, 130.02/2459/1). Ben-Gurion replied to Tov that the operation in the Latin American countries is to be considered crucial to Israel's status and he should do his utmost to gain the support and understanding of the Latin delegates, particularly in relation to freedom of navigation and to the Gaza Strip (see Ben-Gurion to Tov, YA184, 24 December 1956, 130.02/2459/7).
3. See no. 236.
4. Swedish statesman Count Folke Bernadotte was sent to Israel in June 1948 in order to attempt mediation between the parties to the dispute and to supervise the truce declared by the U.N. In his report he proposed that the Negev be handed over to the Arabs and that the Galilee be given to Israel in its entirety; Jerusalem would be placed under

international supervision; the Arab parts of the country would be annexed to Jordan; immigration would be reduced; the Arab refugees would be allowed to return to their homes and a U.N. Conciliation Commission would be set up whose role would be to reach a peaceful solution for the Palestine problem. Both Israel and the Arabs rejected his proposals. Bernadotte's report was tabled for discussion at the third session of the United Nations General Assembly, which convened on 21 September 1948, shortly after Bernadotte's assassination in Israel (see Vol. 2, Companion Volume, pp. xi–xiv).

251. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 28 December 1956

Coded Circular Tel. [673]

Summary

Eytan informs the missions that Israel will evacuate the area west of El-Arish and most of Sinai by 2 January, as the secretary-general had reported to the General Assembly. It will thus prevent a dispute at the Assembly which would undoubtedly spark a renewed demand for full withdrawal, with the setting of a specific date. Israel hopes that time will be gained for calming down the stormy state of affairs and that it will be able to enlist sympathy for its position from international opinion and in the United States.

The essential objectives for Israel are non-reinstatement of the status quo, demilitarisation of the eastern part of Sinai and above all the necessity of remaining in Sharm el-Sheikh until concrete assurances for freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran and in the Gulf of Aqaba are obtained. According to the Assembly resolution, the U.N. force would be unable to remain in Egyptian territory against Nasser's wishes. Therefore, without an absolute guarantee of freedom of navigation Israel will be unable to withdraw.

Eytan estimates that the clash with the U.N. will erupt in the second week of January. Israel will be ordered to withdraw and, if it does not comply, the Afro-Asian bloc and the Soviets will propose sanctions. Preventing that last option would depend on whether a large bloc of states — the larger the better — would take action to back the demand for a concrete assurance on freedom of navigation in the Gulf, and if possible, if a third of the U.N. members could be enlisted against imposition of sanctions.

It is incumbent on the delegations to explain the situation to the respective ministries of foreign affairs. A request should be made that directives be given to the U.N. missions to take an interest in these issues, as well as to approach Washington to become involved. As well as diplomatic action, they should endeavour to influence the press and local figures to voice their opposition to reinstatement of the status

quo, and especially to stress how vital ensuring the freedom of passage in the Gulf of Aqaba is for Israel, international trade and the free world at large.

Notes

1. The Constantinople Convention, signed in 1888 by Austro-Hungary, Italy, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, France, Russia and Turkey, placed a limitation on the sovereignty of the state in whose territory the Suez Canal was located. At the time of signing, Turkey officially held sovereignty over Egypt; however, in practice Egypt was under the protection of Britain. The convention states that the Canal must be open in times of war and peace to all merchant ships and warships, regardless of which flag they fly, and that free navigation through it should not be interrupted in any way whatsoever.
2. See no. 268.

252. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 28 December 1956

Coded Tel. XA227; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

The minister of foreign affairs held a series of talks, with the participation of Eban, aimed at enlisting important American figures to back Israel's demands concerning Sharm el-Sheikh, Gaza, and East Sinai.

Javits will be received by President Eisenhower in a few days. He proposed that Ben-Gurion reply to the president's letter.[2] He plans to host a dinner for Republican senators.

Harriman received a detailed description of the problem. He will consult with Democratic senators in order to make a coordinated public demand.

Bunche: Meir expressed concern over several stands and peculiar attitudes expressed by the secretary-general. Bunche did not deny that Hammarskjöld's attitude towards Israel was cold, but he defended his intention of pushing for an arrangement.

He argued emphatically that the sweeping statement on the abrogation of the armistice agreement with Egypt would cause great complications for Israel in the legal arena. It was made clear to him that a confrontation was anticipated, which Israel would not try to evade, should anyone try to force it to withdraw before reaching an arrangement which it deems reasonable.

Bunche mentioned that the secretary-general stressed in many discussions that deliberations on Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh would be held at a later phase, and his position remains unchanged. Bunche added that the U.N. force would remain

in Sinai for a long time and expressed interest in the assurances demanded by Israel.

Clay thought that an arrangement could be reached by legal and military consultation, but this could take some time and in the meantime no action should be taken. He will say as much to the president and Dulles and ask McCloy to speak with Hammarskjöld, who is obliged to listen to him.

As a result of these talks, the secretary-general and Dulles will soon come to appreciate the determination of Israel to insist on its positions on Gaza and the Gulf of Aqaba.

Notes

1. Arthur Dean.
2. See no. 154.
3. Possibly a reference to Senator Scott's activity in President Eisenhower's election campaign.
4. See no. 242.

253. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 28 December 1956

Coded Tel. 141; Inc.: 130.09/2321/4

Summary

Ross invited Elath for a talk and informed him that Israel's request concerning release of the military items it had bought and paid for, including night-action warplanes and engines,[1] had been discussed again and that the unfavourable decision cannot be reversed. He said that Israel would receive support for its application to the oil companies for increasing the amount of oil intended for its use. Britain will also study the note that Elath submitted on the issue of the Fedaiyun[2] "with a favourable attitude."

Elath expressed his disappointment over Britain's decision and said that he would bring the matter up again in his coming talk with Lloyd. Later he touched on the nature of relations between Israel and Britain and stressed Israel's critical view of British policy in the Middle East since Israel's establishment. The British had systematically attempted to win the Arabs' sympathy at Israel's expense and had learned nothing from their errors. In the end they had failed to bring the Arabs closer and had encouraged Israel's scepticism over their policy towards it.

Ross admitted that their concern over oil supply from the region had forced them to act cautiously and not to identify themselves with Israel, and they had to

maintain friendly relations with the Arabs. Nevertheless, he rejected the accusations of discrimination against Israel and justified British policy towards it.

Notes

1. See no. 133, 223.
2. See no. 221, note 5.

254. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 29 December 1956

Coded Tel. WNTA174; Outg.: 93.01/2213/6

Summary

Eban reports on the conversation which the foreign minister held with Dulles, at which he was also present.

Meir expressed her opinion, in relation to the Sinai Campaign, that Israel had had no choice but to do what it had done. The situation and conditions which caused this explosion must not be repeated. The main point is not only to call for a cease-fire and withdrawal, but to prevent reimposition of the blockade in the Gulf of Aqaba or the renewal of Egyptian aggression towards Israel, based in Gaza and Sinai. Israel does not wish for a clash with the General Assembly, but this may prove unavoidable. Israel desires a clash with the United States least of all, but rather that it should go into the matter and cooperate with Israel to prevent a crisis.

Israel's requests from the United States are as follows:

1) that Dulles state that he advocates freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and prevention of the unbearable situation that would ensue from Egypt's regaining control over Gaza;
2) that he state his position on the matter unambiguously to Hammarskjöld and suggest to him to postpone any proposal for change in the status of the Straits and Gaza prior to achieving permanent arrangements ensuring free navigation and long-term security in Gaza. The United States should use its influence in the General Assembly in the same direction should a dispute arise;
3) that the United States, with its power and influence, should guarantee any arrangement reached for freedom of navigation through the Straits.

Dulles opened by admonishing France, Britain and Israel for their involvement in the war. He argued that there are many states of injustice in the world and they cannot be resolved by the unilateral use of force, outside any international framework and at the expense of the U.N.'s existence. The American protest

therefore is not against Israel's mode of action, that is, lack of consultation prior to the war, but against its content. Both he and the president share this viewpoint with deep conviction.

The issues of the Gulf of Aqaba and Gaza are subject to negotiation with the secretary-general, who is backed by the United States, and Dulles is not authorised to make arrangements behind Hammarskjöld's back. The United States is "immutably committed" to the principle of freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal without any discrimination. In addition, Dulles accepts the view that the Gulf of Aqaba must remain an international waterway open to international navigation. He has no equitable solution to propose for the Gaza Strip issue, apart from stating that the Strip was never a part of Egypt. On the other hand, it was not included within Israel's borders according to the armistice agreements. Aside from setting out these important principles, he has no detailed plan.

Later in the discussion, Dulles criticised Israel's policy, particularly its long-term political outlook. He claimed that it had not made sufficient effort to reduce the animosity towards it of the other countries in the region; only if it did so would its specific demands be met with less opposition. The retaliation and iron fist policy had failed completely, so that Israel's defence policy had, in fact, endangered its security.

Meir expressed her concern over some of the things which Dulles had said. Israel wished for friendship with the United States, not only as a result of the tremendous help it has received from the latter, but on the basis of shared values of culture, society and world view. There is room for disagreement between one free country and another. She asked whether the United States really had misgivings over the essence of Israel's policy, which is one of peace and whether the secretary of state could not admit that the root of the problem was the Arabs' animosity since 1948 and their unwillingness to accept the fact of Israel's existence. Could he not admit that the Arabs were to blame for causing the efforts made by the United States on this subject to fail?

Dulles replied that, indeed, there had been serious provocations by the Arabs, mainly the Fedaiyun activities, but that Israeli policy, especially the retaliatory operations, had greatly contributed to aggravating the situation. With regard to the efforts made by the United States, most of the responsibility for their obstruction indeed fell squarely on the Arabs. While discussing the security situation, the secretary of state quoted Hammarskjöld, who had stated that Israel was chiefly responsible for the lack of progress and for the deterioration of the situation.

Finally, Dulles said that he did not wish this candid exchange of views to be misinterpreted. The profound sympathy that the United States feels for Israel is very real and its roots are very deep. On the other hand, he cannot release Israel from the need to answer the question where exactly it was headed.

Notes

1. Compare *FRUS, 1956*, Vol. XVI, no. 671, pp. 1341–1344.
2. As a Republican representative, Dulles was a member of the U.S. delegation to the third session of the U.N. General Assembly which convened in September 1948 in Paris. His role in the delegation was important and President Truman had appointed him personally. The report by Bernadotte, the U.N. mediator who had been assassinated in Israel a short while before (see no. 250, note 5), was then on the agenda of the General Assembly. Dulles opposed the declaration of the chairman of the delegation, Secretary of State Marshall, that the United States would adopt the Bernadotte report as an equitable basis for the solution of the Palestine problem, and instead showed a sympathetic attitude towards Israel's position (see Vol. 2, Companion Volume, p. 16).

255. G. Meir (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) and A. Eban (Washington). 31 December 1956

Coded Tel. NWT256; Outg.: 93.01/2213/12

Summary

Meir reports on a conversation with Hammarskjöld. Bunche and Kidron were present. The secretary-general began by saying that they do not disagree on the final goal; they do, however, differ as to the tactics for reaching it. He personally remains a friend of Israel, albeit a frustrated one of late.

The conversation took place in a positive atmosphere, and only at one point did a dispute emerge — when Hammarskjöld claimed that the U.N. could not handle the Fedaiyun infiltration properly, as Israel refuses to enable the observers to carry out investigations.

Meir put forward Israel's arguments on Sharm el-Sheikh, the Gulf of Aqaba and Gaza. The secretary-general replied that formally he must insist on withdrawal from all Egyptian territory, pursuant to the U.N. resolutions, and that Sharm el-Sheikh is unquestionably located in Egypt. Personally, he acknowledges Israel's demand to suspend handling of the issue at this point. He made no mention of Gaza, but asked that when handling of the two issues commences, Israel present its stay in the two locations in a positive light.

Bunche claimed that Israel's policy in relation to the evacuation from Sinai made the handling of Sharm el-Sheikh more difficult. Meir pointed out that holding a(l)-Tur is important for the water supply to Sharm el-Sheikh and suggested that Burns should discuss the lines with Dayan.

At the end of the talk Hammarskjöld accepted Meir's summary:

1) that both issues pose unique problems;

2) that he is making a note of Israel's statement that a satisfactory solution must be found for freedom of navigation in Sharm el-Sheikh and for the security issue in Gaza before he could demand evacuation of both locations.

Notes

1. See no. 252.
2. No. 254.
3. On 23 September 1956 Jordanian soldiers opened fire on participants at an archaeological conference at Ramat Rachel. Four people were killed in the attack and 18 were wounded. In response, Israel suspended its participation in the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission meetings.

256. A. Eban (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (New York). 31 December 1956

Coded Tel. WNTA175; Outg.: 93.01/2219/13

Summary

Eban reports on the background to the Eisenhower Doctrine:

The plan's initiator was Allen Dulles, head of the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.), in response to Soviet penetration of the Middle East, the arming of Egypt and Syria and increased Soviet control over them. In his opinion the Arab countries view the Soviet Union as a rising power and believe that the United States had practically abandoned the Middle East. The aim of the plan was to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to the region. The secretary of state, too, had pushed strongly for the acceptance of this line.

Although the new proposition is not aimed directly at the Israeli-Arab dispute, which still remains within the sphere of the U.N.'s influence, its initiators explain that once it is made clear both to the Arabs and to Israel that the United States will not enable the Soviet Union to intervene forcefully in regional affairs, an improvement would ensue on this issue as well.

Congress will undoubtedly adopt the president's proposal, even if in modified form.[1]

Britain and France have responded favourably, although both ask why this has not been done long ago. Israel did not respond. The general assumption is that it would accept this move favourably, particularly following the Bulganin Notes[4] and the Soviet plans for arming Egypt and Syria.

The president will decide whether a hostile act or threat thereof is local — when it would be left to the U.N. to handle — or whether it should be viewed as a Soviet provocation, and then the new guarantee would apply to it. If Congress approves the doctrine, separate talks will be held with every Middle Eastern state that takes an interest in the plan.

Notes

1. The president presented his new Middle East policy (the Eisenhower Doctrine) to Congress on 5 January 1957 and requested its approval. The plan was only approved in Congress two months later. See Editorial Note no. 275.
2. On 2 December 1954 the Mutual Defense Agreement between the United States and the National Government of China was signed, which was intended to deter the Republic of China from attacking Taiwan.
3. This section deals with every country's right to self-defence.
4. Nos. 61, 113.

257. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 31 December 1956

Coded Tel. TNW946, 948; Outg.: 130.02/2459/7

Summary

At his urgent request, U.S. Ambassador Lawson met with Ben-Gurion.[1] He submitted an aide mémoire on the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement which claims that Israel is not entitled to abrogate it unilaterally.[2] The prime minister replied that such an agreement stays in effect as long as both parties comply with it, which is obviously not the case here. For many years Egypt has been persistently violating the agreement, as well as Security Council resolutions and the U.N. Charter. Neither the Security Council, nor the secretary-general, nor the United States have demanded that Egypt desist from this.

According to the Security Council resolution of 1951,[4] Egypt and Israel are not in a state of war. Despite this, Egypt announced the existence of a state of war and imposed a blockade on Israeli navigation through the Suez Canal, in manifest violation of the Constantinople Convention, of the Security Council resolution and of international law. In addition, the secretary-general's mission to the Middle East in April 1956, which was intended to ensure the implementation of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement, proved a failure. Israel cannot agree to a double standard. The president and the State Department know very well who has been frustrating the efforts for alleviating tension and progress towards peace in the Middle East.

The prime minister went on to refer to Dulles' talk with the foreign minister and Eban.[8] Dulles had posed two questions: the first, what would Israel's future look like in a sea of Arab animosity and surrounded by a hostile continent; the second, what has Israel done over the past eight years for progress towards peace.

Regarding the first question, Ben-Gurion reviewed the history of the Jewish people in the Diaspora, showing that Jews have always lived in a sea of hatred. Ever since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Arabs have refused to take the path of peace; instead, they prefer to keep Israel isolated, to boycott it and to attack it incessantly. The fundamental problem is Arab intransigence stemming from Islam and from their history. Nevertheless, the U.N. is partly to blame, and perhaps the United States, too, is not entirely free of responsibility.

In response to Dulles' second question, Ben-Gurion reviewed the dangers that had faced Israel over the past year. Its requests for arms and for a security agreement with the United States were denied. As Israel was eventually left to its own devices, is the United States entitled to complain? Dulles is right to maintain that problems cannot be solved by force, but he is burdened with responsibility for the entire world and cannot comprehend Israel's feelings.

Switching to the issues involving Gaza, Ben-Gurion made it clear that if it were not for U.S. intervention in 1948, Israel would have driven Egypt out of Gaza. Gaza never had been and was not now Egyptian territory and the sole purpose of Egypt's occupation of it was the harassment of Israel and the organisation of Fedaiyun operations. Israel cannot agree to Egypt's return to Gaza, and the idea that an international force should assume control of the region is preposterous, for then Nasser would resume the Fedaiyun operations under its aegis.

As for the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba — since Nasser has proved that his promises are worthless, and that he treats the U.N. resolutions on the Canal with contempt, Israel must remain in the Gulf until it receives an assurance that the blockade will not be reimposed. Only an American guarantee can be viewed as effective. Nasser can close the Canal at his every whim, and it should be in the world's interest to ensure freedom of passage in the Gulf.

In conclusion the prime minister stressed Israel's desire to coordinate its policy with that of the United States.

Notes

1. Compare with Lawson's report on the conversation with Ben-Gurion. *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 3, pp. 5–7.
2. See annex to this document (in English) in the Main Volume.
3. On Hammarskjöld's visit to the Middle East in April 1956, see Vol. 11, no. 200.
4. Security Council Resolution S/2322 adopted on 1 September 1951 called on Egypt to cancel the illegal restrictions on passage of Israeli ships through the Suez Canal.
5. See Vol. 11, no. 200.
6. *Ibid.*, no. 263.

7. Article VII of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement deals with the reduction of both parties' forces and with their mutual withdrawal on the western frontier and on the eastern frontier. See Vol. 3, appendix F.
8. No. 254.
9. See no. 256, note 2.
10. In the margins of the aide mémoire Eytan wrote: "Herzog, what should we reply? This is beginning to cause complications." Herzog replied: "I don't think we are obliged to answer immediately. Let's wait for developments. Meanwhile, we have not given notice of juridical revocation; a political statement has simply been issued."

258. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 31 December 1956

Coded Tel. 151; Inc.: 130.02/2459/7

Summary

In a talk with Hadow, Shek brought up the issue of freedom of navigation as instructed in Coded Circular Tel. 664,[2] putting special emphasis on the common interest of Israel and Europe in preventing the clock from being put back. Hadow said that Israel had already been told their view which supports freedom of passage. Shek replied that this is insufficient and that they must explain this to the U.N., the United States and the other states, and obtain their help at the General Assembly.

According to Hadow, Israel should direct several questions to Egypt from the Assembly podium. Is it in a state of war with Israel? Will it take upon itself to stop the Fedaiyun operations? Will it open the Canal?

Shek replied that preferably others should raise those questions and not enable Egypt to hide behind a unilateral interpretation of the General Assembly resolution of 2 November, but to condemn it for violating the U.N. Charter and its resolutions.

Hadow said that it is possible that other states would follow in Israel's footsteps if it holds its ground with Egypt and the U.N., and expressed his concern that the U.N. may enable reimposition of the blockade as well as the Fedaiyun attacks.

He still had no details on the new U.S. plan,[3] but said that it represents an end to the Tripartite Declaration.[4] Shek commented that Israel had not been satisfied with the declaration and expressed his hope that the new plan would not repeat the errors of the past.

Notes

1. In this telegram, Eytan ordered the Israeli delegates to submit to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs a note responding to Egypt's accusations about damage to the Santa

Caterina monastery in Sinai and to attach the statement by a Red Cross representative, which denies these accusations (see Coded Circular Tel. 665, 27 December 1956, 130.09/2377/4).

2. This telegram stated the following: "The fate of the Gulf and the maritime passage to Eilat will be determined by the position of the United States. The pressure that the European states will put on the United States is invaluable. Please make the utmost effort to bring about firm statements both in diplomatic channels and in the press. The importance of the Gulf to the European economy should be explained thoroughly and in as much detail as possible. Reimposition of the blockade is unthinkable, all the more so as the outcome of U.N. action. Is it feasible to demand of Israel to pull out its forces from the entrance to the Gulf, which ensure freedom of passage for ships of all nations, so long as there are no assurances that the passage would remain free? The United States received a binding pledge from Egypt in 1950 saying that it would not interfere with the free passage in the Gulf. It is incumbent on the United States to insist on fulfilment of this pledge and to guarantee it" (see Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circular Tel. 664, 27 December 1956, 130.09/2377/4).
3. The Eisenhower Doctrine. See Editorial Note no. 275.
4. See no. 4 note 2.
5. The conclusion Shek expressed in his letter was that it can be seen from Hadow's answers that Britain backs Israel's demands for ensuring freedom of navigation and preventing the rebuilding of the bases of attack in the Gaza Strip, although it is anyone's guess what form this backing will take (see Shek to the British Commonwealth division, 4 January 1957, 130.23/3098/5).

259. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division. 31 December 1956

Coded Tel. 381; Inc.: 130.02/2459/7

Summary

Tsur reports on a conversation with Blankenhorn.[1]

1) The victory in Sinai had caused an improvement in Israel's status in the Federal Republic of Germany. Public opinion is more favourable than ever. Due to appreciation for Israel's military power, the proponents of the pro-Arab policy have lost ground.
2) Adenauer is adamant in his support for Israel and is using all his influence on the United States to help it and to strengthen the Anglo-French position. The ambassador believes that he will keep his word on establishing diplomatic relations with Israel in the coming months.
3) Tsur described Israel's position with respect to Gaza and the Gulf. Blankenhorn promised to convey this to Adenauer and expressed his confidence that their

representatives in Washington will act to back up Israel's arguments. He believes that pressure from the majority at the U.N. could be averted, if the United States agrees.

4) At the NATO meeting, the Germans did all they could to fortify the position of Britain and France on the Middle East. He does not share the French pessimism and sees signs of a serious change in attitude on the part of the United States.
5) He asked about the pipeline. Tsur told him about the plan in broad lines and threw in the idea of West European collaboration. Blankenhorn said that any plan that could serve to improve the ties between the European countries would undoubtedly be accepted by the Germans. He will make inquiries in Bonn, but his initial response is that if the plan is proposed by France, it would be accepted eagerly by its partners.

Notes

1. Herbert Blankenhorn, ambassador of West Germany (the Federal Republic of Germany) to NATO.
2. See nos. 126, 248.

260. A. Eban to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. 31 December 1956

Copy: 93.03/3064/1

Notes

1. See no. 219, note 2. See also the report on Israel's applications to the U.N. General Assembly on 3 and 10 December about Fedaiyun operations on Israeli territory which were directed and supported by Egypt (Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circular Tel. 651, 24 December 1956, 130.09/2377/4).
2. Concurrently with Eban's application to Hammarskjöld, the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on 30 November in which he referred to the continuing Fedaiyun attacks on Israel organised by Egypt. The statement concluded as follows: "This policy constitutes an overt breach on the part of Egypt of the armistice demanded by the General Assembly resolution and of its commitment to put an end to all acts of belligerency against Israel" (see Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Israel missions abroad, Uncoded Circular Tel. 680. 30 December 1956, 130.09/2377/4).

261. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and A. Eban (New York). 1 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA 953; Inc.: 93.01/2188/10

Summary

Herzog relays the decisions taken at the government meeting on 31 December[1] to the foreign minister and Eban:

1) The Gaza Strip: Israel will oppose reinstatement of an Egyptian force or entry of a U.N. force. It will continue to exercise de facto control over the Strip (without annexing it or putting forward a claim for annexation at this point)[2] and continue with the provision of services. If any form of U.N. supervision is forced upon Israel, the government will hold discussions on it.
2) In Sharm el-Sheikh, the objective is to ensure freedom of navigation in the Straits and in the Red Sea for Israel and all other countries. The IDF will remain in place pending an assurance of effective and absolute freedom of navigation. (A pledge by Nasser or a mere U.N. resolution will not be accepted as sufficient guarantee. Nasser has violated U.N. resolutions and is liable to continue to do so in the future as well.)
3) The demilitarisation of Sinai, or at least of a strip from South Sinai to the Mediterranean Sea along the international border, is desirable; however, Israel will not make its withdrawal conditional on demilitarisation.
4) After 7 January 1957, the IDF will again withdraw 20–25 kilometres during the course of one week.
5) Israel sees the need to resolve the refugee issue, including the refugees in the Gaza Strip, by means of the U.N., and is prepared to help as far as possible.

Herzog hopes that the additional withdrawal after 7 January will help Israel gain another week, before a decision at the United Nations. Thus it would have sufficient time to bring the issues of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba as well as its position on Gaza and the demilitarisation of part of Sinai before international public opinion, and mainly the United States.

Notes

1. Following Meir's conversation with Dulles on 29 December (no. 254), Ben-Gurion decided to anchor Israel's demands in a resolution by the government. The discussion on the subject was to take place at the government meeting on 30 December, but since the report on Meir's meeting had still not arrived, it was postponed until the following day (see stenographic record of the government meeting, 31 December 1956, in file 77/33/15).

2. During the government meeting, Barzilai and Bentov, the representatives of Mapam (United Labour Party), proposed to annex the Gaza Strip to Israel immediately, but eventually withdrew their proposal.

262. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 1 January 1957

Coded Tel. WIA109; Inc.: 130.002/2459/14

Summary

Eban replies to Herzog's telegram above.[1]

In reference to 1) Israel will have to consider what attitude to adopt should it face the proposal that the U.N. enter the Strip without the IDF pulling out, namely, the presence of a token U.N. force to demonstrate the international nature of the issue.

In reference to 2) how would Israel respond should the U.N. say that its force would be stationed in Sharm el-Sheikh, would prevent the establishment of military posts, would ensure freedom of passage, and would not leave until an effective arrangement to ensure freedom of navigation was arranged, unless the General Assembly instructs them to do so? There is a possibility that provisions will be proposed which public opinion will regard as a sufficient guarantee, so that there will be no inclination to back Israel's demands. Even now, Israel is being pressed to define what in its view constitutes an effective and absolute guarantee, and it will be unable to evade answering for much longer.

To 3): It is possible that a proposal would be made to demilitarise the eastern part of Sinai, providing that Israel agrees to some demilitarisation of a strip, even if only a narrow one, on its side of the border. It would be wise to consider in advance the response to such a proposal. Does Israel's proposal for demilitarising Eastern Sinai imply demilitarisation with or without the stationing of the U.N. force?

Further comments made by Eban: he suggests postponing and drawing out the announcement of the further withdrawal of 25 kilometres during the week after the beginning of January and also that Israel should be ready to agree to hold onto Gaza and the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba only, and no other Egyptian territory, barring Sharm el-Sheikh and its immediate surroundings.

Note

1. No. 261.

263. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog (Jerusalem) and A. Eban (New York). 1 January 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA 257; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Kidron reports on the key points of his conversation with Bunche.

1) The talk between the secretary-general and Dulles[1] more or less covered the subjects of the talk with the foreign minister.[2] The secretary-general is satisfied with the outcome of both talks.
2) Dulles revealed that his legal advisors disagree on the issue of Israel's rights to free passage through the Canal, which are based on the 1888 Convention. Bunche was greatly dismayed by this situation and reverted to his proposal that Israel find a way to ensure that its declaration of abrogation of the armistice agreement would not have legal consequences which would cancel the Security Council's resolution of 1 September 1951, which is based on this agreement.[3]
3) Following the talk with the foreign minister, Burns was asked to meet with Dayan again and attempt to convince him to modify the withdrawal plan. Bunche mainly insisted on a(l)-Tur and suggested solutions to the problem of water supply to Sharm el-Sheikh. He explained that the U.N. would be unable to make concessions on these points.
4) In the interest of preparing a formal inquiry to Egypt on the Fedaiyun problem, Leary was asked to endeavour to confirm the list of complaints submitted in a letter to the secretary-general.[4]
5) As a result of all their contacts with the Egyptians, both in Egypt and in New York, the secretary-general and he believe that the Egyptians are seriously contemplating an arrangement with Israel. Bunche maintains that it is possible to bring them back to the same situation they faced in 1949, when they agreed to "break the ice" and sign the armistice agreement with Israel.

Notes

1. In a conversation held on 31 December the following subjects were discussed: freedom of navigation for Israeli ships through the Suez Canal, the status of the Gulf of Aqaba as an international waterway and the future of the Gaza Strip. As for the Suez issue, Hammarskjöld held that if an international court supported Israel's argument, Egypt would respect its ruling. He agreed with the provision that the Gulf of Aqaba is an international navigation route and proposed an interim solution of UNEF control over the Gulf so as to avert clashes between Israel and Egypt. As for Gaza, Hammarskjöld did not offer any solution, but only stated that the Israeli military occupation and

administration in the Strip would not continue (see *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 1, pp. 1–3).

2. See no. 260.
3. The allegation made against Israel both by the State Department and by Hammarskjöld was that in abrogating the armistice agreement with Egypt (in the statement by Ben-Gurion in the Knesset on 7 November 1956), Israel had restored the state of belligerency between the two countries. In order to refute this, Eban wrote to Hammarskjöld on 3 January, at the directive of the government, and informed him that the statements made in relation to the armistice agreement should not be taken to imply acknowledgement of a standing state of belligerency or of rights of warfare or of any other wartime principle.
   Regardless of the status of any other agreement, Israel and Egypt were signatories to the U.N. Charter. Their legal relations, therefore, did not exist in a vacuum and they were bound to mutual obligations pursuant to the U.N. Charter. These obligations are incompatible with a state of belligerency between any two member states of the U.N. An aide mémoire prepared by Jacob Robinson on the legal relations between Israel and Egypt was enclosed with the letter.
   The letter and the original aide mémoire have not been found, but the letter is cited in its entirety in Eban's unpublished work, *The Political Battle*, p. 138.
4. No. 260.
5. See no. 270.

264. A. Eban (New York) to the U.N. Secretary-General. 2 January 1957

Copy: 130.02/2448/13

Notes

1. See no. 221.
2. See Editorial Note no. 11.
3. No. 159.
4. No. 182.
5. No. 207.
6. No. 225.
7. No. 260.

265. S. Levin (Rangoon) to W. Eytan. 2 January 1957

Orig.: 130.23/3096/22

Summary

At the directive of Eytan,[1] Levin held a comprehensive conversation on the key issues facing Israel with Barrington, the director-general of the Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and submitted a note on the Fedaiyun question. The director-general promised to present the contents of the note and the conversation to the Cabinet committee on foreign affairs in the near future. Levin also brought up these subjects with U Thant (the secretary to the prime minister), stressed the need to give appropriate directives to their U.N. delegate prior to resumption of the General Assembly discussions and requested that he press the prime minister to do so.

The following day, U Thant conveyed to him the prime minister's answer: the Burmese government is unwilling to take the initiative in submitting draft proposals at the U.N. for resolving these issues; it will, however, instruct its delegate to join an initiative taken by another state. Additionally, it will instruct its delegate in Washington to approach the State Department with the aim of spurring it into action.

The Burmese press gave favourable publicity to the reports on the Fedaiyun, as well as to the diplomatic activity of the Israeli delegates in the different capitals. Levin is pulling strings with the newspaper editors to publish additional statements in Israel's favour.

Notes

1. No. 251.
2. U Nu resigned from the premiership of Burma in June 1956 for a predetermined period of one year in order to rehabilitate his party. However, his return to office was declared as early as late December. He resumed office as prime minister only in late February 1957.

266. E. Dobkin (Jerusalem) to J. Tsur (Paris). 2 January 1957

Copy: 93.02/206/9

Summary

Dobkin reports on the surprising developments in the field of immigration. The plan to bring in 55,000 Jewish immigrants over the course of nine months (January–September 1957) cannot provide an answer to the rising pressure, particularly from the Eastern European countries.

1) In Poland, 38,000 Jews have already registered for emigration. Evidently the overall number of Jews remaining in Poland is higher than previously thought. In addition, 20,000 Jews of Polish origin have arrived from Soviet Russia.[2] There are at least 90,000 Jews in Poland, two-thirds of whom are candidates for emigration. Anyone who wishes to leave can do so freely. Given the present situation, the quota of immigrants from Poland for January will grow to 3,500 individuals.
2) Hungary: Out of the 12,000 Jewish refugees already concentrated in Austria, the immigration of 6,000 is being arranged. More, however, are arriving. The average of 1,500 per month appears realistic, but may prove insufficient due to the pressure of necessity.
3) Egypt: 4,350 Jews have already left. 5,000 more are known of whose departure is in progress. There are contradictory reports that expulsions are continuing or being stopped; here too, there will possibly be a need for rescue efforts on a much larger scale than previously estimated.

In light of this development, all the existing resources are insufficient for absorbing the anticipated waves of immigration. There should be no reversion to the method of setting up immigrant camps and ma'abarot (transit camps), which involves holding thousands in a state of idleness; nonetheless, it would be inconceivable to reduce numbers given the historic opportunity for rescuing Jews.

Notes

1. The letter was not found.
2. See nos. 274, 313.

267. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 3 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA958; Inc.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Herzog transmits two communiqués sent by Burns to Dayan:

1) "I note Israeli forces evacuating territory north and west of line which you gave me on 26 December,[1] and that after 1200 hours 7.1.57 no Israeli units will be north and west that line. Furthermore that previous arrangement in respect of Qantara–El-Arish road stands. I must again state withdrawal to this line does not constitute compliance with undertaking which Mazkal [secretary-general] received from Eban on 21 Dec.[2] I understood question being taken up with Eban.

   In particular, am instructed say that Israel representative in New York again stated Israel forces will be nowhere west El-Arish by end first week January. As to West El-Arish expect place could be evacuated by 7 January and am to request your confirmation this be effected.

   Without prejudice to position stated above I would inform you that noting withdrawal you propose to effect by 1200 hours 7 January UNEF will advance approximately points indicated my liaison."

2) "Israeli Foreign Minister assured Mazkal yesterday that Israel would carry out withdrawal proposal of 21 December presented by Eban which unequivocal no Israeli troops would be west El-Arish.

   Presume you will be receiving new instructions from your government and shall gladly meet you discuss consequent technical arrangements.

   Am to remind you firm promise been given Mazkal that there be no further demolitions in Sinai and hope all Israeli forces concerned so instructed.

   Meanwhile UNEF forces be instructed advance according my previous message conveyed you today by my liaison officer."

   In response, Dayan protested the needless mention of the destruction in Sinai and proposed an imminent meeting with Burns. At the meeting, Dayan would state that although the evacuation of a(l)-Tur was not included in the original agreement, in view of the special request made by the secretary-general, Israel would agree to include a(l)-Tur in the evacuation taking place until 7 January. No Israeli force would remain west of El-Arish.

Notes

1. See no. 242.

2. See no. 225.
3. See no. 268. Herzog sent this telegram on behalf of Eytan (see entry in Herzog's diary, 4 January 1957, 43.5/4510/3).

268. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 3 January 1957

Coded Circular Tel. 690; Outg.: 130.09/2377/5

Summary

Eytan instructs the missions to request a meeting with the minister of foreign affairs or with a senior official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and submit an aide mémoire (telegraphed separately).[1] In the accompanying text, the following should be mentioned:

1) The vital nature of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israel and its great importance as an alternative route to the Suez Canal for international commerce, particularly the transport of oil.
2) Israel is abiding by its obligation to the U.N. from 9 November; no Israeli forces will remain west of El-Arish by 7 January and more than 60 percent of Sinai will have been evacuated by Israeli forces.
3) It is unthinkable that the U.N., when demanding the withdrawal of Israel's forces, intended the reinstatement of the status quo of the state of belligerency and blockade. Egypt has announced that it will renew the Fedaiyun operations and has actually begun doing so, and has stated that it will not allow the passage of Israeli ships through the Canal. It is holding negotiations with the Soviets for additional arms.
4) The U.N. force advancing in Sinai is an interim force and the duration of its stay in Sinai depends on the consent of the Egyptian government. The meaning of this is that at any point Nasser could request its withdrawal, whereupon his army would seize control of the posts from which it attacked Israel and imposed a blockade, and according to Egypt's announcements, intends to continue to do so.
5) Israel will not allow, in any way, reimposition of the blockade in the Gulf. It cannot be expected to withdraw without first having received effective, permanent assurances for freedom of navigation.
6) Israel asks the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to which the aide mémoire is addressed:
   a. To listen to proposals concerning international guarantees for freedom of navigation.

b. To approach the United States, which could hold the key to this issue, and to urge it to act.
c. To instruct their respective U.N. missions to stay in regular contact with the Israel mission on this issue.

Along with the submission of the aide mémoire, Eytan assumes that the Israeli delegates are putting these ideas before the government and public opinion in their countries of service in talks with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, relevant officials and newspaper editorial boards. Public statements are not to be made at this point; the purpose is for the local press and people, rather than the Israeli representatives, to express their views publicly on the freedom of navigation in the Gulf.

Notes

1. The aide mémoire deals with freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and has not been printed here. See in file 130.09/2377/5.
2. In an aide mémoire submitted to the U.S. ambassador to Cairo on 28 January 1950, the Egyptian government declared that it had conquered the islands of Sanafir and Tiran as a defence measure against surprise attack, and that it had no intention of preventing free navigation between the islands and the coast of Sinai (*FRUS, 1950*, Vol. V, p. 711).

269. Meeting: Chief of Staff M. Dayan — Major-General E. L. M. Burns (El-Arish, 4 January 1957).

Report: 130.16/2959/16

Summary

A report on the topics discussed in the Dayan-Burns meeting:

1) Withdrawal of the IDF forces

[...][1]

2) The withdrawal from El-Arish

Burns pushed for entry of UNEF to El-Arish right away, arguing that El-Arish constitutes a focal point for the evacuation, as well as the natural centre for UNEF in its takeover of Sinai. Dayan refused to enter any discussion on this issue, stating that he has explicit orders to leave it to the political echelon to discuss in New York and Jerusalem.

At Burns' request, Dayan reviewed several details pertaining to problems with the civil administration in El-Arish. Burns explained that he wishes to re-establish the town's old Egyptian administration, insofar as it still exists, and to assign it to handle all these problems.

3) Santa Caterina monastery

A discussion was held on the visit of the UNESCO delegate, Prof. Gerard Garitte from Belgium, to the monastery during the entry of UNEF forces to the site, for the purpose of safeguarding its cultural treasures. Dayan explained that transfer of the monastery had been moved to the next phase, since the IDF still has need of the routes in its vicinity, but on the other hand, the monastery and the treasures inside must not be left unguarded and unsupervised. Israel will gladly receive the UNESCO delegate and offer him all necessary help.

4) Exchange of prisoners of war

Burns brought up the subject of prisoner exchange and stated that he knows of only four Israeli prisoners of war. The chief of staff explained that Israel had already given notice through the Red Cross of its readiness for prisoner exchange but Egypt was uncooperative.

To Burns' question regarding the Fedaiyun brought to trial in Israel and accused of criminal offences, Dayan emphatically replied that Israel would not agree to view them as prisoners of war and would therefore not release them from prison. Israel would, however, be willing to consider their exchange for the Jews convicted in the Cairo trial.[3]

Burns pledged to inform Egypt of these matters. As far as he could tell, the Egyptians would not agree to exchange the Fedaiyun for the Cairo prisoners, but would agree to an exchange that excludes the Fedaiyun, seeing that they are very eager for the return of the thousands of prisoners held by Israel.

Notes

1. The first paragraph of the report, omitted here, deals with technical arrangements and timetables for the IDF's withdrawal from Sinai.
2. Lieutenant Colonel Salah Gohar, director of the Division for Palestine Affairs at the Egyptian Ministry of War.
3. The prisoners referred to were Egyptian Jews, members of an intelligence and sabotage network, who operated in Cairo in July 1954 on the initiative of Israeli intelligence. They placed incendiary bombs in both local and Western (British and American) buildings and public facilities in Cairo in order to delay the evacuation of the British army from the Suez Canal region. The network members were caught and tried in December 1954. Two of them were executed, while the others were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. See Vol. 9, Editorial Notes nos. 418, 536.

270. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 4 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA262; Outg.: 93.01/2185/9

Summary

Kidron gives an account of his conversation with Cordier,[1] who told him of his impressions of his visit to Egypt and his meeting with Nasser.

Cordier brought up the issue of how the British and French nationals and the Jews with Egyptian citizenship are being treated and stressed that the end of hostilities enables the Egyptian government to relieve their situation. Nasser claimed that foreign nationals are not being treated severely, and that measures were taken only against those who endangered the country's future, and they are few in number. With respect to the Egyptian Jews, it is not his government's intention either to expel or dispossess them. The measures taken against some of them were aimed at Zionists and other elements who posed a threat to Egypt's welfare. As for the confiscation of property — this was done only to prevent currency smuggling on a scale which was dangerous to the economy.

Cordier also discussed the role of the U.N. force with Nasser. He gained the impression that rather than demanding the force's pullout, Nasser may well demand its stay, even after the participating countries choose to remove their units. When asked whether the Egyptian army would enter Sinai in the wake of the U.N. force, Cordier replied that it was agreed with Nasser that there would be a wide separation between the UNEF and the Egyptians.

The issue of navigation through the Suez Canal was also discussed. Although Israel was not expressly mentioned, Cordier claimed that Nasser had used the words "all users," without making any exception.

Notes

1. Andrew Cordier, executive assistant to the United Nations secretary-general.
2. Alfred Katzin, special assistant to the secretary-general in charge of the clearing of the Suez Canal.
3. Nabih Yunis, Egyptian deputy minister of finance.

271. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 4 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA261; Inc.: 130.02/2459/2

Summary

Eban proposes to abandon completely the idea of guarantees from the United States as defined by the prime minister[1] which would necessitate a Senate resolution on an issue irrelevant to the Sixth Fleet. With regard to taking military action against disruption of the freedom of navigation, Israel is certainly no less authorised than the United States to issue a statement and to carry it out, and is much more entitled to do so with respect to its interests.

In his opinion, the maximal guarantee conceivable is comprised of five elements:

1) A statement by the secretary-general saying that the Gulf is an international waterway and that UNEF's role is to safeguard the freedom of navigation, thus it would be stationed in the crucial locations.
2) Agreement with the secretary-general and the United States that UNEF would not leave as long as no permanent arrangement on the navigation issue has been agreed upon.
3) A statement issued by Israel at a proper moment that disruption of navigation would be viewed as an act of aggression.
4) Maintenance of marine and aerial forces in the Gulf and its proximity.
5) As many statements as possible by additional maritime powers, France and Norway among others, that the matter of freedom of navigation is essential to them.

If these conditions are obtained, Israel would be able to ensure the freedom of navigation.

Note

1. See, for example, Ben-Gurion's words on a guarantee from the United States for freedom of navigation in his conversation with Lawson — no. 257.

272. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 4 January 1957

Coded Tel. WIA124; Inc.: 130.02/2459/8

Summary

In a conversation with Eban, Rountree asked how the U.N. could guarantee the freedom of navigation. Would a General Assembly resolution do? Eban answered in the negative and said that the legal situation in the Gulf of Aqaba is as clear as it is in the Suez Canal, and that the issue is a political and practical one, namely, how to prevent Egypt from violating international law. With respect to the proposal to station the U.N. force there, he said that no temporary guarantee is enough because it does not provide a feeling of security without which transportation and supply routes cannot be opened.

During the course of the discussion Eban explained the importance of Eilat from the aspect Dulles had mentioned — Israel's integration into the region.[1] As long as there is still no regular traffic in the Red Sea, it is difficult to assume that Israel could have significant relations with Asia and Africa and it would remain linked to Europe and America alone. If and when trade and political relations develop with Africa and Asia, the Arabs would remain isolated in their non-recognition policy. Eilat and the Straits of Tiran are the key to this vision.

The link between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea is one of Israel's few geopolitical advantages. Through its thoughtful and efficient utilisation, in a spirit of international responsibility, it could gain some significance in the international geopolitical and transportation balance.

Note

1. This was Eban's reply to the question presented by Dulles in his talk with Golda Meir on the future of the State of Israel — see no. 254.

273. Z. Argaman (Washington) to J. Herzog. 4 January 1957

Coded Tel. WIA126; Inc.: 130.02/2459/8

Summary

In Eban's meeting with Rountree, at which Bergus and Argaman were present, Eban asked him to clarify several principles of the Eisenhower Doctrine,[1] stating that Israel has yet to determine its position on the plan.

Rountree stressed that the United States had reached the conclusion that constitutional authority must be obtained in order to answer the demands of the Middle Eastern countries that are ready and willing to resist Soviet aggression. The president, by requesting a Congress resolution, intended to obtain authority that would enable him to give military assistance and cooperation to countries requesting it on the basis of bilateral agreements. However it should be made clear that this plan is not intended to undermine or threaten the authority of the U.N., which the United States continues to view as a key instrument for defence against aggression.

Eban wished to elucidate several points — definition of the term aggression; the connection between this plan and the Baghdad Pact; what the economic part of the plan consisted of and the reactions of the Arab countries. Rountree answered his questions. It was agreed that following the president's speech they would have a further talk on the subject.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 275.
2. See no. 272.

274. A. Eshel (Warsaw) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 January 1957

Coded Tel. 64; Inc.: 130.09/2306/12

Summary

Eshel and Duvdevani, director of the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency, held discussions in Warsaw with the Israeli minister and his aides to find solutions to the problems of mass emigration from Poland and to those that would arise if large-scale repatriation from the Soviet Union commenced.

Eshel infers from talks with the minister, the staff, and Jewish activists that the situation is more delicate than was assumed and it is uncertain whether the exodus of Polish Jewry would continue uninterrupted until the tens of thousands of immigrants had left. The emigration is being carried out by the authorities under the pretext of family reunion and without negotiating with the Israeli representatives. Any upheaval in the Eastern Bloc or in the Middle East may bring about a drastic reduction or a demonstrative halt of the emigration. Therefore the tendency is to accelerate the process as much as possible and to reach as many as four thousand immigrants per month.

Note

1. See no. 313.

275. Editorial Note

The Eisenhower Doctrine (5 January 1957)

On 5 January 1957 President Eisenhower presented his new Middle East policy to a joint meeting of the two Houses of Congress. Congress was requested to delegate to the president the authority to use U.S. financial aid and even military power to support Middle Eastern countries threatened by communist aggression.

The Eisenhower Doctrine marked a change in the policy that the United States had implemented for several years, whereby it left all problems in the region to the U.N. and expected it to provide solutions to the disputes, the hostile acts and the tension there.

Britain's and France's bitter failure in the Suez Crisis put an end to the remnants of their influence in the Middle East. The United States reached the conclusion that direct and decisive involvement on its part was required to fill the ensuing political and diplomatic vacuum and to prevent Soviet encroachment in the region. The Eisenhower Doctrine was designated for this purpose, and in effect replaced the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, although the latter was not officially abrogated. The president, speaking in Congress, stressed the direct American interest in the Middle East and the threat looming over it.

The Doctrine's key points were as follows:

1) Economic and military assistance to and cooperation with every country in the Middle East that requested it to develop its economic strength and to safeguard and maintain its political freedom;
2) A U.S. commitment to use its military force (subject to the deciding authority of the Security Council) to ensure the territorial integrity and political freedom

of countries requesting assistance against direct or indirect armed aggression on the part of a country controlled by world communism;

3) American economic assistance under the Mutual Security Act without restrictions from Congress.

Financing the Doctrine did not require immediate allocation of money and the president said that, for the time being, the amount allocated for the current fiscal year ending on 30 June (200 million dollars) would suffice. However he said that he would demand a sum of 400 million dollars for 1958 and 1959, which would be added to the sums allocated within the framework of the Mutual Security Act.

A special mission would be dispatched to the Middle East to explain the proposals to the countries of the region. As for the Israeli-Arab dispute, the future of the Arab refugees, and the status of the Suez Canal, the president said that these issues, although aggravated by Soviet involvement in the Middle East, were present previously. Thus they were excluded from the scope of the Doctrine, showing the U.S. intention to leave the handling of them to the U.N. in the future as well.

276. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 January 1957

Coded Tel. 408; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on a conversation with Joxe, who was leaving for the U.N. There he would join Pineau, who intends to hold a frank talk with Hammarskjöld before the latter's visit to Cairo, to prevent further concessions to Nasser. Their intention is to fight for a clear position of the U.N. and the United States to resolve the urgent issues which may give rise to renewed tension in the Middle East.

The issues are as follows:

1) Guarantees of freedom of navigation for British and French ships, as well as Israeli ones, through the Suez Canal as soon as it re-opens.
2) Release of the French property in Egypt and ending the deportation and persecution of French citizens.
3) A concrete guarantee against infringement of freedom of navigation rights in the Gulf of Aqaba, and leaving the Israeli forces there pending a satisfactory arrangement.
4) Non-return of the Egyptians to Gaza and leaving the Israeli administration there, perhaps with the addition of U.N. observers, pending the resolution of the Gaza issue.
5) Non-return of an Egyptian army into Sinai.

With respect to points 3) and 5), Joxe said that he asked Gilbert for explanations, in order to know to where exactly Israel is prepared to withdraw, so that France would not take a more extreme position than the Israelis. He was satisfied with Gilbert's answer. The best argument, in his opinion, is that if Israel's demands are not accepted, the campaign would be renewed after several months.

Tsur also discussed the pipeline issue with Joxe and will telegraph about this to Bartur.[1]

Note

1. In this telegram the following was said: "Joxe told me today that a government decision on the pipeline indeed exists but that the government does not understand its own intention. Negotiations are being held between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to decide on a position. The inclination is for a16-inch diameter pipe and for participation in the difference between that and the 8-inch diameter. Joxe will attempt to accelerate the inter-office debate and is striving for results in the coming days. He and the minister of foreign affairs are in favour of dispatching a mission to Israel; however, there is no point in a mission as long as the government offices here have yet to reach an agreement among themselves" (see Tsur to Bartur, Tel. 409, 5 January 1957, 72.2/915/30).

277. M Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 6 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA264; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Kidron sums up Eban's meeting with Hammarskjöld on 5 January, with Bunche, Martola, and Cordier participating.

The secretary-general expressed his disappointment over the rate of evacuation in Sinai. Even after the next withdrawal, 40 percent of Sinai will still remain in Israel's hands; this territory includes virtually all the intersections, whereas the remaining 60 percent are mostly barren desert without any means of transportation. He believes a pivotal point in negotiations had been reached. The U.N. delegations have not received the facts on the rate of evacuation and it is high time to reveal all. Bunche again directed attention to the fact that Israel's occupation of Sharm el-Sheikh apparently necessitates its control over two-fifths of Sinai.

Eban pointed out that in his opinion Israel had fully performed its obligations from 21 December.[3] As for the next phase, he will request immediate instructions from the government.

Later in the conversation, the secretary-general referred to the questions asked at the meeting on 21 December, which he was requested to pass onto Egypt. A heated debate ensued, where he argued that the main functions of the U.N. force were to oversee the cease-fire and keep track of the withdrawal of foreign forces. If Israel wished to modify these functions, it should apply to the General Assembly. Therefore, it was too early to discuss delegating further functions to the force, as long as it had yet to perform its chief duties. Discussions over issues such as Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza pertain to the broader context of relations between Israel and Egypt. As for the Fedaiyun issue — Israel had not submitted complaints on the latest incidents and the Radio Cairo announcements did not constitute sufficient grounds to approach the Egyptian government formally, although he had approached them informally on more than one occasion. Cordier added that the Fedaiyun actions serve as a reprisal for the invasion of Sinai and until Israel implements the U.N. resolutions, they will probably continue. Eban vigorously refuted the secretary-general's suppositions.

Finally, Hammarskjöld submitted an aide mémoire whose key points are:

1) The Suez Canal. On the practical issue of the Canal's clearing he has nothing to add to what has been publicised so far. As for the legal aspect, the U.N.'s position had been determined by the Security Council resolution of 1951. The secretary-general is unauthorised to proceed beyond these formal positions.
2) Fedaiyun. He adds passages from his well-known position on acts of retaliation and ends with the comment that the time has not yet come to ask one party formally to carry out an obligation from the 2 December resolution while the other party is not carrying it out.
3) The free passage through the Straits of Tiran—it should be guaranteed that the Straits and the Gulf are regarded as an international waterway. Prevention of possible acts of belligerency following Israel's evacuation would fall under U.N. jurisdiction.
4) The issue of Gaza is not mentioned in the aide mémoire.

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 16 December.
2. See no. 242.
3. See no. 225.
4. No. 264.
5. The aide mémoire is in file 93.03/3064/5.
6. In a talk with Bunche after the meeting with Hammarskjöld, Bunche clarified the secretary-general's view on freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba:
   1) Israel's departure and the U.N. force's entry with a defined function of preventing belligerency.
   2) Negotiations over the permanent arrangement that will serve as a guarantee for keeping the Gulf open to navigation.

3) During these negotiations, the U.N. force will remain where it is. Hammarskjöld was of the opinion that not only would the freedom of navigation be ensured most effectively by Israel's withdrawal, but that Israel's stay on the Gulf coast was hindering the establishment of the permanent arrangements for freedom of navigation there (see Eban to Herzog, XA266, 6 January 1957, 130.02/2459/14).

278. A. Eban (New York) to the Prime Minister. 6 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA265; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Eban describes a consultation which took place in the mission following the conversation with Hammarskjöld[1] and summarises the assessments and recommendations accepted by the foreign minister:

1) The period for buying time has ended. It appears that leaving Israeli forces in Sinai is weakening Israel's position in the campaign for freedom of navigation in the Gulf and for Gaza.
2) Until they receive Israel's agreement to evacuate the remaining parts of Sinai, Hammarskjöld and the Americans are not ready to discuss arrangements for freedom of navigation, except for reiterating abstract legal trends. Israel would also find it difficult to obtain support at the General Assembly for its demands.

The following conclusions stem from the above assessments:

1) Hammarskjöld should be informed of Israel's readiness to complete the withdrawal from all territory in Sinai except for Sharm el-Sheikh by 18 January. Care must be taken to receive express assurances for a wide separation between the Egyptian forces and Israel.
2) In this statement Gaza should not be mentioned, just as Hammarskjöld made no mention of it.
3) Until the 18th of the month, the campaign over the Straits should be intensively conducted, both among the delegations and in the capitals, including Washington. If Hammarskjöld pushes for evacuation of Sharm el-Sheikh without guarantees for freedom of navigation, Israel will voice its objection to the General Assembly. In order to avert this crisis, Hammarskjöld or his envoy should be invited to Israel to learn at first hand how vital these issues are.
4) Observers should be asked to investigate the Fedaiyun operations. This does not necessitate reverting to the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission.[2]

This proposal alone could buy more time and create more convenient conditions for the main campaign.

Notes

1. No. 277.
2. See no. 255, note 3.

279. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 6 January 1957

Coded Tel. WIA127; Inc.: 130.02/2459/14

Summary

In response to Herzog's question,[1] Eban explains the following:

1) Following the resolution of the General Assembly, which had received the secretary-general's second report, a rule was fixed — that an invitation from Egypt is necessary for the U.N. force's entry, but a request from Egypt is not enough to withdraw it. The General Assembly alone will decide when the force has completed its task. This was said by the secretary-general and the United States, too, openly supports this concept.
2) Hammarskjöld has the right to define the function of the force on behalf of the General Assembly; the prevention of acts of belligerency in general and those from Sharm el-Sheikh in particular has already been set out verbally and in writing.
3) When asked until when the U.N. force is to remain for carrying out this function, the secretary-general and the United Stated replied: until it completes its function of preventing any possibility of belligerency.

All the above analysis is purely juridical. Another, more fateful, question is whether the secretary-general would give a pledge on this (his authority is unquestionable). Among those maintaining that he possesses such authority are Norway, Colombia, Brazil, Canada, and the United States.

Notes

1. Herzog asked Eban what legal authority the United States and the secretary-general had for telling Israel that UNEF would remain on Egyptian soil against Nasser's will (see Herzog to Eban, Tel. TNWA966, 6 January 1957, 93.01/218614).
2. See no. 127, note 4.
3. See Argaman's report on his meeting in the Department of State with Wilcox, Ludlow and Gamon (Argaman to Eban, DNA 462, 2 January 1957, 93.01/2188/10).

280. A. Eban (Washington) to W. Eytan. 6 January 1957

Coded Tel. 128; Inc.: 130.09/2312/2

Summary

Eban replies to Eytan's telegram[1] on the guarantees issue. He holds that the possibility of an active American guarantee for freedom of navigation is unrealistic.

1) The United States would not use armed force to maintain freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. It believes that the U.N. is capable of ensuring this with American support. It had not considered making such guarantees for navigation in the Suez Canal, even though its significance is incomparably greater to the United States than that of the Gulf.
2) The Gulf is not included in the scope of U.S interests. The United States is not a guarantor of any other international waterway.
3) Israel has exactly the same right as the United States to announce that it would view interference with navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba as an act of belligerency against which it will act forcefully. Implementation of such a guarantee is certainly within its military capability. Israel should formulate such an announcement when it evacuates Sharm el-Sheikh and convey it to the U.N. and to all the maritime powers. Israel is definitely entitled to claim that an attack on maritime traffic to Israel is practically an attack on Israel itself, which justifies reliance on article 51 of the U.N. Charter. [3]

Notes

1. In Eytan's telegram to Eban (6 January 1957, 130.02/2459/8) he asked: "When Rountree inquired about the guarantees, did you not see fit to mention Egypt's obligation to the United States from January 1950? You have not responded to my previous telegram on the subject, but it appears to me that the United States could certainly demand performance of the obligation and guarantee it. Does this seem to you a highly unusual idea?" See also no. 272.
2. See no. 268, note 2.
3. The article in the U.N. Charter which deals with every state's right to self-defence.
4. See no. 256, note 2.

281. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 7 January 1957.

Coded Tel. TNWA974; Outg.: 130.02/2459/14

Summary

Ben-Gurion maintains that Hammarskjöld's failure to mention Gaza does not carry any special significance.[1] The State Department's approach on the subject of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Commission was undoubtedly made at Hammarskjöld's suggestion.[2] His use of the words "residual questions" is not to say that he would not exert pressure to continue the evacuation process immediately following the withdrawal from all of the Sinai desert.

Ben-Gurion supports evacuation of the desert even if guarantees are not obtained, but Israel would not withdraw from Gaza or Sharm el-Sheikh, even in the event that the United States imposes sanctions. There is a possibility that an embargo on transfer of money to Israel would be imposed, but the only issue which really worries him is that of oil.

He does not support the proposal to invite Hammarskjöld or his envoy for a visit to Israel.

Notes

1. See no. 277.
2. See no. 257.
3. That evening, Ben-Gurion gathered Eshkol, Dayan, Herzog, Eytan and Isser Harel together for a consultation (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 7 January 1957). The next government meeting took place only on 13 January (see no. 308).

282. E. Elath (London) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 7 January 1957

Coded Tel. 188; Outg.: 93.0/2215/13

Summary

Elath reports on a conversation with Lloyd. Elath stressed Israel's distrust of Nasser, especially as he does not hide his hostile intentions towards it. He mentioned Nasser's statement on the conditions for allowing passage of British and French ships through the Canal,[2] constituting a new stage in his violation of the Constantinople

Convention, which began by prohibiting Israeli navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. Elath requested Lloyd to back Israel's demands by giving appropriate directives to the British delegation to the U.N. and to the ambassador in Washington.

Lloyd sympathised with Israel's desire to make its withdrawal from Sharm el-Sheikh conditional on obtaining concrete assurances and expressed his readiness to back the requests raised by Elath. He presented several alternatives for guarantees in the U.N. for Israel to consider.

They went on to discuss the situation in Jordan and the activities of the Fedaiyun operating from there. Elath maintained that even though these activities were carried out under Egyptian guidance, Israel could not relieve Jordan of responsibility. Lloyd stressed that Britain's agreement with Jordan[3] has yet to be cancelled and if Israel were to attack and the Jordanians applied for assistance from the British army, his government would have to fulfil its obligation.

At the end of the conversation Elath raised the arms issue. He said that Israel was not satisfied with Ross' reply[5,6] and asked Lloyd to re-examine the request. Rose (the director of the Levant Division), who took part in the conversation, stressed the threat to Britain's status in the U.N. if it became known that it supplied arms to Israel in contravention of the Assembly resolutions.

Lloyd proposed that Elath would state "on his personal responsibility" the number of warplane engines essential to Israel and these will be shipped immediately with his approval.[7] He asked whether Israel would agree that the spare parts and ammunition for the destroyers be shipped to Malta and thence to Israel.

Elath mentions favourably Lloyd's sympathetic attitude compared to their previous conversations, but adds that far-reaching conclusions should not be drawn from this conversation. Among the most significant points, in his view, was Lloyd's statement regarding the British intention to abrogate the agreement with Jordan. This may remove one of the most significant factors that has been a constant obstacle to the improvement of Israel's relations with Britain.

Notes

1. See no. 268, note 1.
2. No. 268.
3. In a broadcast on Cairo Radio on 6 January an announcement was made on behalf of Nasser, saying that Egypt would not allow passage of British and French ships through the Suez Canal as long as Israel had not evacuated its forces from the Gaza Strip and relinquished control of it to Egypt. In addition, he said that he would not give any ship passage through the Canal if it did not pay the passage fees directly to Egypt. In response, the following day the British Foreign Office stated that it denounced Nasser's announcement and viewed it as extortion and in contradiction of the six principles for operation of the Canal decided on by the members of the Security Council on 13 October 1956 (see no. 9, note 1).

4. See no. 15, note 2. On 27 November 1956 Jordanian Prime Minister Nabulsi announced that his government would take political and financial measures to abrogate the agreement between Britain and Jordan, to remove the British forces from their bases in Jordan and to demolish these bases. This resulted from Britain's violation of the agreement and the fact that since its signing many international changes had taken place. In place of the financial assistance from Britain, Jordan would receive financial support from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. In a meeting that took place in Cairo on 19 January 1957 with the participation of these countries and Jordan, the extent of assistance to Jordan was determined. In early February talks commenced between Britain and Jordan on the evacuation, and the agreement between them was cancelled on 13 March.
5. No. 253.
6. Ross was the assistant permanent under secretary (director-general) at the Foreign Office.
7. Elath provided the necessary data in a letter he dispatched to Lloyd the following day. (The letter is in file 130.23/3098/5). Following this, Lloyd made another proposal — that Israel would ship Britain warplane engines for reconditioning. The different proposals for the supply of arms and spare parts to Israel were transferred by Ross to the Ministries of Defence and Trade for discussion. Ross summarised the conclusions in a letter to Hoyer Millar, who succeeded Kirkpatrick as the permanent under-secretary (director-general) of the Foreign Office in February 1957: Israel should be made aware that Britain is essentially willing to assist it, but has to take into account the General Assembly resolutions; after Israel's withdrawal, and in spite of the U.N. resolution on the arms embargo, Britain would be willing to accept warplane engines for reconditioning from Israel. Hoyer Millar replied that as long as there was deadlock in New York, Israel could not expect Britain to reach a decision on this subject (see Ross to Hoyer Millar, 20 February 1957, TNA, PRO FO371/127780 530202; Hoyer Millar replied to Ross in the margin of the same letter).

283. British Commonwealth Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in London. 7 January 1957

Coded Tel. 622; Inc.: 93.04/328/22

Summary

The division reports on the prime minister's conversation with the British ambassador, Nicholls, which was held at the ambassador's request.

1) At the directive of his government, Nicholls informed the prime minister of their decision not to supply the arms requested by Israel for the time being and of their inability to release the items that have already been approved. The reason given was the General Assembly resolution of 2 November. Ben-Gurion replied that he was aware of their decision, and as for the reasoning behind the refusal, it was common knowledge that despite that General Assembly

resolution, the Soviet Union was continuing to supply arms in considerable quantities to Syria and perhaps to Egypt as well.

2) The prime minister explained Israel's position on the issues of the Gaza Strip and Sharm el-Sheikh. He stressed the great importance of ensuring freedom of navigation in the Gulf not only for Israel, but for Western European countries and Commonwealth countries such as Australia and New Zealand as well. Nicholas promised to convey this to his government.
3) Nicholls was of the opinion that during the last two years there had been considerable improvement in the relations between Britain and Israel. Ben-Gurion commented that as long as the British deluded themselves with the hope that they could ensure their status in the Middle East while relying on the Arab countries, no fundamental change would come about in their policy towards Israel.

Note

1. Compare Nicholls' report to the British Foreign Office on this meeting, 7 January 1957, TNA, PRO FO371/128126 530202.

284. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Bartur. 7 January 1957

Coded Tel. 419; Inc.: 130.09/2347/4

Summary

Tsur reports on a discussion held in the French Minister of Finance's bureau on France's participation in financing the oil pipeline. Kosloff and Tsur gave a briefing on the financial, technical, and political arrangements. The French were very cautious and did not make any commitments. They voiced all the counter-arguments, including the fear that the Arabs would boycott France if it participated in the pipeline.

Tsur said that pressure against France could also increase due to Algeria and, for that matter, any other reason for extortion that the Arabs could come up with, and that the French government had taken on itself greater risks than this in the past. The French promised to submit to the minister a detailed aide mémoire forthwith and to consult with him. They are inclined towards the proposal to send a committee to Israel and promised to accelerate a decision in this spirit.[1]

Note

1. In reply to this telegram, Eytan wrote to Tsur: "We are worried about the procrastination in arranging the negotiations for the pipeline in spite of the French government's decision, and fear that in the meantime the objectors will grow in number. Gilbert confirms this apprehension. It is therefore essential that you see Mollet right away, to inform him of the non-implementation of the government's decision, which is causing loss of precious time, and to urge him to give an unequivocal directive to the technical offices to appoint their representatives, who will enter negotiations either here or in Paris, at their choice. If the occasion of the foreign minister's passing through Paris can be used for holding a talk with Mollet, all the better. Otherwise you must arrange for an immediate interview" (see Tel. 167, 8 January 1957, 130.06/1948/7).

285. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and A. Eban (New York). 8 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA975; Inc.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Herzog communicates to the foreign minister and Eban the prime minister's suggestion that in view of the anticipated political struggle at the U.N., they should come to Israel for a few days to take part in a serious government deliberation.

They should inform the secretary-general that Israel agrees to a withdrawal of a further 25 kilometres from the 7 January line, which will be carried out during the course of one week (except for a withdrawal from the Sharm el-Sheikh region) whose details will be agreed upon between Burns and Dayan. Regarding the remaining withdrawal, the government will hold a special meeting shortly after the arrival of Meir and Eban, and a final answer will be given within several days. The assumption is that the secretary-general will not raise the issue at the General Assembly before receiving an answer from Israel.

Ben-Gurion holds that there is no point in continuing the negotiations with the secretary-general. Herzog, however, proposes to clear up certain details with him in order to buy time until the crisis erupts.

Notes

1. No. 277.
2. No. 278.
3. See no. 306, note 1.
4. See no. 255; this paragraph states the following: "He [Hammarskjöld] is taking note of our statement that a satisfactory solution must be found for the freedom of navigation at

Sharm el-Sheikh and for the security issue in Gaza before he demands that we evacuate these locations."

5. No. 281.
6. This deliberation saw the participation of Eshkol, Dayan, Eytan, and Herzog. See entry in Herzog's diary, 7 January 1957, 43.5/4510/3.
7. Meir's reply to this telegram was: "Ben-Gurion. I have consulted with Abba [Eban] and the other members and we concluded that Abba cannot travel at present for the following reasons:
   1) The political and public information campaign that we are currently conducting with great vigour in preparation for a possible conflict at the General Assembly.
   2) Guidance and activity with regard to the discussions currently being held in Congress on the president's Middle East programme.

   I shall arrive in Israel on Wednesday" (see Meir to Ben-Gurion, XA271, 7 January 1957, 130.2/2459/14).

286. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 8 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA280; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Kidron reports on a meeting that Eban and Rafael held with Bunche and Cordier.[1] Eban informed them that the foreign minister is returning to Israel to take part in urgent government deliberations, and that it is quite possible that he would soon be leaving as well. He expressed his opinion that in these meetings the government would finalise its policy on the whole range of issues concerning Sinai, Gaza, Sharm el-Sheikh and Suez. He will therefore be able to present the secretary-general with a full picture on his return. Meanwhile, in order that there should be no interruption of the withdrawal, he is authorised to report on a further evacuation of 25 kilometres east of the present line, excepting the Sharm el-Sheikh region.

Eban inquired as to whether the decision on holding the Assembly meeting will be suspended until the following week. Cordier mentioned that the secretary-general is under great pressure on this issue. In a private conversation held later, Bunche pledged to undertake to persuade the secretary-general not to hold the meeting.

Eban raised several questions with regard to the last phases of the withdrawal — what the U.N.'s policy was towards wide separation between the U.N. force and the Egyptian army and what the secretary-general's interpretation was of the term "residual"[2] which he had used in relation to Gaza and the Gulf of Aqaba. Bunche and Cordier explained that this term designates time, not content; the issues have been put aside for a certain period during which the secretary-general will be open for receiving proposals for handling them. The issue of separation of forces is still irrelevant.

When Eban brought up the dreadful reports on the suffering of Egyptian Jewry and inquired whether the U.N. is doing all within its power on the topic, Cordier, the person in charge of handling the issue, replied that the U.N. indeed was doing everything possible, but that the key factor in the ordeal of Egyptian Jewry was the slow rate of the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. The Israelis protested strongly against the attempt to link the two matters.

Notes

1. The minutes of the meeting are in file 130.02/2448/7.
2. See no. 277.

287. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 8 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA280; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Eban describes the intensive activity taking place amongst the delegations at the General Assembly.

The Israeli delegates have met collectively with several delegations. Campaigning on the Gulf issue was received with unconcealed sympathy and there were those who expressed their surprise that Hammarskjöld had not gone to the heart of the matter or begun formulating guarantees. On the Gaza issue response was weaker, though not unfriendly. The delegation members pushed for a positive plan and considered whether U.N. rule is the eventual solution. The general impression is encouraging.

Eban invited several delegation leaders for talks with the foreign minister. Friendly discussions took place, particularly with representatives of Japan, Ethiopia, and Liberia. Meetings with the Latin-American bloc were set for the following day.

It is of utmost importance that this activity should continue daily up to the expected struggle at the General Assembly, in addition to the meetings in Washington. Therefore the proposal made by Herzog that Eban should abandon everything and fly to Israel is worrying and should be considered with caution.

Note

1. See no. 285.

288. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 8 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA978; Inc.: 93.01/2185/9

Summary

Herzog reports on Lawson's conversation with Ben-Gurion at the request of the ambassador. Lawson had brought with him the State Department's observations on his last talk with the prime minister.[1]

Israel should maintain a policy aimed at winning the Arabs' friendship. The United States wishes to cooperate, but the success of its efforts depends on Israel itself seeking paths to peace.

The State Department is doubtful whether Israel's claim that the armistice agreement with Egypt is null and void serves Israel's best interests and whether on this basis it can claim that the state of belligerency does not exist. The State Department refers to the paragraph in the 2 November resolution[2] dealing with the armistice agreement.

The question of the ultimate disposition of Gaza remains open; nevertheless, the State Department continues to support the 2 November resolution on withdrawal. It is more optimistic than Israel with regard to the role of UNEF in Gaza and believes that its presence there may create prospects for practical solutions to the problems.

Dulles stated that he viewed the Gulf of Aqaba as an international waterway, but added that there will be difficulties to finding a solution by peaceful means, given Israel's past activities. The solution should be hammered out with the secretary-general. The State Department points out that the presence of the U.N. force at the entrance to the Gulf may lay the basis for a solution to the problem.

Regarding the circumstances which led to war, the Department mentions that on submitting the draft resolution to the General Assembly, Dulles explained why use of force is unacceptable for resolving issues.

In his reply to the above notes, Ben-Gurion said that in Israel's opinion, the armistice agreement is nonexistent and it will not permit Nasser to return to Gaza. With respect to the Fedaiyun threat, there is no difference between the presence of an Egyptian force or the international force in Gaza. The State Department does not understand the threat looming over Israel from Gaza if Israel relinquishes its control there. Gaza may again become not only the base for Fedaiyun, but the centre for their organisation from Jordan as well, and Israel will not allow the renewal of the threat to the Negev settlements.

As for freedom of navigation in the Gulf — Israel has learned from past experience that an abstract right without the means for its implementation is worthless.

Ben-Gurion wondered how the U.N. force would be able to secure freedom of navigation when no one knew how long it would be stationed in Sinai.

He devoted the bulk of his words to the State Department's reference to the 2 November resolution. He elaborated on the motives for the Sinai Campaign as specified in his letter to General Bedell Smith,[5] and claimed that he cannot agree in any way with the notion that the United States, which was well aware of the situation in the Middle East, had any moral right to take the stance that it had.

Notes

1. See telegram of the State Department to the U.S. embassy in Israel, *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 6, pp. 10–11. See also the Lawson report on the meeting with Ben-Gurion, *FRUS, ibid.*, no. 9, pp. 12–14. On the meeting, see no. 257.
2. See Editorial Note no. 11,
3. Article 12 in the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement authorised either of the two signatories to request the secretary-general to convene a joint conference to reconsider, amend or nullify the agreement or any of its conditions. Israel sent Hammarskjöld such an application in November 1953, and in fact he took the first steps for calling a conference. However, due to Jordan's absolute refusal to take part, the secretary-general gave notice of his failed attempt on 24 March 1954 (see Vol. 9, Companion Volume, introduction, pp. xi–xii, and no. 122).
4. No. 257, appendix.
5. In the letter of 2 January which he had sent through Shiloah to Bedell Smith, Ben-Gurion responded to Dulles' arguments in his talk with Meir (no. 254) and described the Jewish people's persistence throughout the ages, while surrounded by abysses of hatred. He justified Israel's going to war, and insisted on its demands regarding Gaza and the freedom of navigation (the letter is in file 30.02/5936/57). Ben-Gurion's arguments impressed Bedell Smith, who passed the letter on, along with his recommendations, to the attention of Dulles and Eisenhower.
6. Following the talk with Lawson, Ben-Gurion called a meeting with the participation of Dayan, Herzog, Eytan, Eshkol and Harel. Among other matters, the possibility of imposition of sanctions on Israel was discussed. Ben-Gurion asked Eshkol how long Israel could hold out economically without the assistance of the United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Development Bonds, in the event that sanctions were imposed. Eshkol estimated that Israel would be able to endure this situation for about three months and that it was possible, with rationing, to prolong this period by a few more months (see entry in Herzog's diary, 7 January 1957, 43.4/4510/3).

289. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 9 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA287; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Kidron has heard from his sources that the Arabs are expecting the secretary-general's report within a few days and will demand shortly afterwards to convene

the General Assembly. If the secretary-general does not report, they would demand the report from him at the Assembly. In anticipation of the gathering, al-Rifai (Jordan's permanent delegate to the U.N.) prepared two alternative drafts of the resolution. The first includes a denouncement of Israel, a demand that it evacuate its forces to the armistice demarcation lines within 72 hours and a request of the General Assembly to discuss sanctions in the event of non-compliance. The second draft contains neither a denouncement nor a time limit. Instead, stress is put on the fact that Israel has not implemented the previous resolutions and it is required to evacuate its forces forthwith, otherwise sanctions will be imposed.

At the meeting of the Afro-Asian bloc it was decided, under pressure from Egypt, to attempt to submit the first draft, despite the scruples of many of the participants. The Indians, who fear a discussion on Kashmir, said that they would be unable to join the demand for sanctions.

Note

1. In this telegram, Kidron reported that Bunche had told him that the secretary-general will probably be compelled to submit an interim report on the withdrawal within a few days. If the report is submitted, it will be brief and factual, and will end in the statement that Israel will submit its views on the general situation next week, thus obviating the need for convening the General Assembly meeting (see Kidron to Herzog, XA286, 9 January 1957, 93.01/2186/4).

290. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan and M. Bartur. 9 January 1957

Coded Tel. 427; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Tsur met with Gazier[1] in order to discuss the oil pipeline and to secure his help. Joxe and Daridan also participated in the discussion.

Gazier requested details of Meir's conversation with Dulles[2] and inquired how firm Israel was in its demands regarding Gaza and the Gulf. Tsur replied that Israel was determined to defend its own interests in the matter. Gazier affirmed Joxe's statement that the French government will demand a solution to the problems involving the Suez Canal and Israel's demands for viable guarantees in open discussions with Hammarskjöld and Dulles. He pledged unreserved support.

The French expressed their satisfaction with the firm position taken by the British Foreign Office on the passage of British ships through the Canal, but feared that this resolve would not last long. Hence they view themselves as isolated in their struggle to reach a settlement in the Middle East.

Gazier asked for Tsur's opinion with respect to the Eisenhower Doctrine,[3] about which he and Joxe were most sceptical. They said that the plan was full of

vacillation, ambiguous and appears to them as "too little and too late." The only positive point about it was the warning to the Soviet Union.

With regard to the pipeline, Tsur expressed his amazement that the subject was still in the investigative phase and stressed the importance of the time factor in relation to the medium diameter pipeline. The French were chiefly concerned with the question where the oil would come from and if Iran could be relied on as a supplier. Tsur stressed that the investment was relatively small and thus the risk, even assuming a worst case scenario, pales in comparison to the political and practical profits to be gained from the pipeline. Gazier and Joxe promised to see to it that the internal deliberations decided on by the government take place as soon as possible, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Industry all taking part.

Notes

1. Gazier served as acting minister of foreign affairs, since Pineau had left for New York at the time, to attend the U.N. General Assembly.
2. No. 254.
3. See Editorial Note no. 275.
4. See no. 284.

291. F. E. Shinnar (Cologne) to W. Eytan and the West European Division. 9 January 1957

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.23/3099/25

Summary

Shinnar met with Blankenhorn upon the latter's request and explained to him the issues relating to Gaza and the Gulf of Aqaba. With respect to the pipeline, he informed him about the plan to approach relevant circles in the Federal Republic of Germany in order to interest them in this plan. Blankenhorn said that the prospects for a favourable response were good, though he suggested that the French should propose to the German government to participate, as a form of cooperation which would contribute to West European integration.

Shinnar broached the issue of diplomatic relations between Israel and West Germany and stressed that since their last conversations in June 1956[1] things had changed, and that the West should take an interest in a process that would lead to the establishment of normalised diplomatic relations. Blankenhorn looks very favourably on this plan, stressing that immediate action must be taken to conclude the matter in the near future. He attaches great importance to an attempt by Israel

to influence an official in the State Department, preferably not Dulles, to imply to the German ambassador that the United States would view the establishment of relations as a proper step to emphasise that the State of Israel is an established fact which the Arabs should also recognise.

[...][2]

Notes

1. See Vol. 11, no. 314.
2. The passage that was deleted here deals with a conversation with the Indian ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany on discussions between Nehru and Nahum Goldmann regarding Goldmann's plan for resolving the Israeli-Arab conflict; see also Goldman's aide mémoire to Nehru of 18 November 1956, in file 130.02/5934/21.

292. M. Tov (New York) to the Latin American Division. 9 January 1957

Coded Tel. 290; Inc.: 130.09/2333/5

Summary

Tov reports on the meeting between the minister of foreign affairs and the delegates of the Latin American countries, for the most part heads of delegations and their deputies, which was held in a friendly atmosphere marked by understanding for Israel.

The foreign minister stressed the vital need to ensure, at the very least, a de facto peace and to avert the possibility of a new conflagration. This could be achieved by imposing a separation between the forces, as a result of the presence of UNEF, preventing Egypt from renewing its presence in Gaza, and upholding freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. In light of the above, she explained Israel's position on the issue of Sharm el-Sheikh. If the secretary-general were to demand full compliance with the 2 November resolution without providing guarantees for the enforcement of these points, this might well bring about a new war. They should therefore strive to ensure that the General Assembly will not be a party to such a dangerous move.

Efforts will continue to influence the Latin American delegates, at the foreign minister's request, to voice their concerns in this spirit in the General Assembly debate. The Brazilian delegate, who was asked by the secretary-general when his country was prepared to dispatch soldiers to UNEF and for how long, answered that forces were ready for immediate dispatch, and for a period of one to two years as

required, provided that the time they spend in UNEF would be used for attempting to achieve peace.

Note

1. See no. 264.

293. D. Ben-Gurion: Diary Note. 10 January 1957

Copy: Ben-Gurion Archive

Summary

Meir, who arrived from New York at Ben-Gurion's request, gave an account of her impressions of the General Assembly and of her talks with Hammarskjöld and Dulles. Following discussions on the Gulf of Aqaba and Gaza, in which Meir, Eytan, Herzog, Dayan and Eshkol took part, it was decided not to withdraw from either location at all costs. Herzog assumed that there would not be a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly in favour of imposing sanctions on Israel; however, there was no guarantee that the United States would not impose sanctions in effect. The United States had in fact halted the discussion on the grant-in-aid and the Food Surplus Law. Similarly, it is possible that the United States will impose an embargo on transfer of money to Israel. In Eshkol's opinion, this would not amount to a terrible disaster.

In a meeting of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of the Knesset Ben-Gurion proposed that Israel should not withdraw from Gaza or the Gulf and that a committee be established to prepare an economic contingency plan in the event of sanctions imposed by the U.N. or the United States. Josephthal and Eshkol were entrusted with the task of assembling this committee. It was also proposed to enlist world Jewry to stand by Israel in its struggle.

It was agreed not to launch a campaign against Hammarskjöld, despite his behaviour with regard to Nasser and Egyptian Jewry and his discrimination against Israel.

Ben-Gurion expressed concern over Eli Ginzberg's letter to Teddy Kollek dated late December[2] describing the atmosphere in the White House and the assumption current there that Israel is a spoke in the wheels of normal relations with the Arab world, particularly in light of Meir's conversation with Dulles[3] and of the last message from the State Department delivered by Lawson.[4]

Notes

1. The letter has not been found. See no. 299.
2. The letter, of 21 December 1956, has not been found but in Ben-Gurion's diary a letter of reply to Eli Ginzberg is found (dated 10 January 1957), which includes reference to subjects raised in Ginzberg's letter to Kollek. However later in the diary note Ben-Gurion writes: "Doubt has arisen in my mind over whether arguing with him is worthwhile," and in the letter of reply, a handwritten marginal note reveals: "not sent."
3. No. 254.
4. No. 288.

294. A. Eban (New York) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 10 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA293; Inc.: 130.02/2459/14

Summary

Bunche reported to Eban that Hammarskjöld had held talks with several delegations which had expressed interest in the issue of the Gulf of Aqaba. The talks were positive and Hammarskjöld is beginning to think that a solution may yet be found. Among the things that encouraged him were the Indians' expression of moderate views and sympathy with Israel's demand. The talks were intended to explore the possibility of arriving at a General Assembly resolution to empower UNEF to ensure freedom of navigation until a final settlement is reached. The Assembly, barring the Arabs, is almost unanimous in the opinion that the blockade in the Gulf will not be reimposed.

With the start of practical discussions on the Gulf issue, the secretary-general is acting to defer the Assembly session; he has decided not to publish an interim report in the next few days, despite pressure from the Arabs[2] and has managed to convince the rest of the Asians not to press the issue.

The question of Gaza appears to the U.N. secretariat more complicated than the Gulf. The general tendency is to give precedence to the Gulf and Suez issues and put off dealing with Gaza until later. Bunche stressed that this is the approach taken by the secretary-general and the Western delegations.

A tactical situation is evolving that would allow Israel to stall for time while completing the evacuation of Sinai, with the exception of Sharm el-Sheikh; in the meantime, every effort would be made to deal with the issue of freedom of navigation while further postponing the Gaza question.

Notes

1. See no. 287 and no. 295 below.
2. See no. 289.

295. A. Eban (New York) to G. Meir. 10 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA292; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Eban summarises the views of several delegations, as expressed by the British representative, Dixon, and the Australian representative, Spender, that the secretary-general, the Americans, and others should be urged to take a public stand (in accordance with article 8 of the secretary's report to the Assembly from 6 November) that the Assembly alone can decide on withdrawing the U.N. force from the Gulf, should it enter, and that such a withdrawal would be considered only after a durable and effective settlement which would ensure permanent freedom of navigation has been reached.

296. D. Lewin (New York) to W. Eytan. 10 January 1957

Orig.: 130.23/3093/23

Summary

Lewin reports on the position of the Asian states on the issue of Sharm el-Sheikh. He maintains that everything depends on the formulation of the proposal which is submitted to the General Assembly. In talks with them they expressed greater understanding for Israel's demands on this issue than for its demands on Gaza, which are more ambiguous. However, their comprehension of the problem will not bring them to take any initiative on intervention or voting in favour of Israel.

297. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 11 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA986; Outg.: 130.02/2459/14

Summary

Herzog believes that Israel should try to procrastinate for ten more days before the confrontation at the General Assembly so that the campaign to influence public opinion in the United States would reach its height and the arguments on the Gulf and Gaza issues would have a hearing in the various capitals. Preparations are also being made for Israel's stand in the face of economic pressure.

The political move which will be proposed to the government at its forthcoming session is as follows:

1) Transmitting a statement to the secretary-general saying that Israel will withdraw to the armistice demarcation lines within one week.[1] With respect to Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza, the government is still deliberating and he will receive proposals toward the end of the week.
2) At the end of the week the secretary-general will receive a formal statement saying that Israel will pull out of Sharm el-Sheikh as soon as freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and through the Suez Canal has been guaranteed. In addition, the proposals on the Gaza issue will be submitted to him.

In consequence, presumably the secretary will either continue his talks with Israel or report everything to the Assembly and the resulting clash will take place on 21–22 January.

Next week no public statements will be issued by the government.[2]

Notes

1. The details of the withdrawal were determined in the meeting between Dayan and General Burns at El-Arish on 10 January (see report by Eliahu Zeira, 10 January 1957, 130.16/2959/16).
2. In response to the telegram, Eban wrote: "The central issue is whether we want to obtain effective guarantees that will enable our withdrawal from Sharm el-Sheikh while securing freedom of navigation by means of international measures, or do we intend to make such extreme conditions for evacuation that conflict becomes inevitable… The proposed formula in [telegram] 986, which states conditions rather than parallel arrangements, makes a clash virtually inevitable with no way out and, I fear, with no prospect of success. It is easy to discuss tactics when the orientation is clear. Are you convinced that we desire freedom of navigation and nothing else?" (see Eban to Herzog, TNW 184, 12 January, 1957, 130.02/2459/14).

298. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog (Jerusalem) and A. Eban (Washington). 11 January 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA263; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Kidron concludes from the contacts that have taken place over the past few days in the U.N. that all circles express sympathy and understanding for Israel's position on the issues of freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran and preventing the reinstatement of a belligerent Egyptian military base in Gaza. Israel's friends are considering how to translate this positive attitude into a formula that will not contradict the demand for withdrawal behind the armistice demarcation lines. Most of them view the secretary-general as the key person for both issues, though he himself agrees that Sharm el-Sheikh should be addressed first and the Gaza issue be put off for later. The British and the Americans both believe that the Sharm el-Sheikh issue can be resolved by inclusion of a statement in the secretary-general's report defining the U.N. force's function there as well as the duration of its stay.

The American position, as explained by Barco, is that freedom of navigation should not be made a condition for withdrawal, but the issue must be resolved in parallel to the withdrawal nonetheless. The Americans doubt that the secretary-general will be able to guarantee that the U.N. forces remain stationed in Sharm el-Sheikh until an arrangement is made ensuring freedom of navigation. However, he could claim that since one of the U.N. force's duties is to prevent hostile acts, the force is to remain in place until all threats of hostility have been removed. They will propose such a formulation to the secretary-general and believe he will accept it. Concurrently, the Americans deem it advisable to change the nature of the Afro-Asian draft resolution[1] by making amendments reinforcing the principle of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal, as well as prohibiting raids from the Gaza Strip.

Dixon, the British representative to the U.N., stressed the importance of the formulation of Israel's reply to the secretary-general. He explained the necessity to use positive language and refrain from making any condition whatsoever. In his opinion, the secretary-general wishes to appear before the General Assembly with a positive report on the evacuation and is willing to address the Sharm el-Sheikh issue as a problem that requires a special solution. If the formula of the report will enable Israel to agree to a withdrawal from Sharm el-Sheikh, then the Assembly could perhaps be kept from meeting; such a meeting would be difficult for Israel, owing to the drafting of the Afro-Asian resolution.

Note

1. See no. 289.

299. D. Ben-Gurion to K. Nkrumah (Accra). 11 January 1957

Copy: Ben-Gurion Archives

Notes

1. The letter has not been found.
2. On the declaration of Ghana's independence, Israel established a consulate and appointed Hanan Yavor as consul. On 29 March 1957 the consulate in Accra assumed embassy status and Ehud Avriel was appointed ambassador.

300. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 12 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNW988; Outg.: 130.02/2459/14

Summary

Herzog replies to Eban's telegram regarding the withdrawal.[1] The prime minister maintains that it is impossible not to mention Sharm el-Sheikh, otherwise Israel will be accused of deceit. Herzog proposes the formulation to be submitted to Hammarskjöld:

> By January 22 Israel will withdraw her forces from the Sinai peninsula up to the Israel-Egyptian frontier, on which withdrawal technical arrangements can be made forthwith with General Burns. On the question of evacuation narrow strip on western coast Aqaba Gulf, which in present circumstances ensures navigation in gulf, and on other aspects of Assembly's resolutions Israel Delegation will present substantive concrete proposals to you course this week.[2]

Herzog believes that in order to stall for time, it is advisable to hold the second meeting with the secretary-general in a few days, and only then to inform him that Israel will withdraw from Sharm el-Sheikh after freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal has been secured. Israel views implementation of the following points as an effective guarantee for the Gulf:

1) An Assembly resolution that the international force remain stationed on the west coast of the Gulf of Eilat pending a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt.
2) An agreement between Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia on freedom of navigation in the Gulf.
3) An effective guarantee from the Great Powers.[3]

In addition, proposals regarding the Gaza Strip would be submitted (telegraphed separately)[4] should the need arise to discuss Gaza at this point.

They think that the Suez Canal should be mentioned in Israel's statement so as to link this matter to the 2 November resolution, to prevent discrimination and to serve as a bargaining counter.

Notes

1. In this telegram, Eban suggested a formulation for a general statement to be transmitted to the secretary-general, saying that the withdrawal of Israeli forces to the armistice demarcation line will be completed by 22 January and that the Israeli government was currently discussing the other aspects of the General Assembly resolutions. The Israeli delegation would discuss these matters with the secretary-general within a few days. Eban assumed that such a statement would help Israel's friends defer the Assembly discussions in order to give the processes within the Latin camp and the British Commonwealth time to mature (see Eban to Herzog, WIF150, 11 January, 1957, 130.02/2459/14).
2. This formula was altered according to Eban's proposal (see no. 303) and was submitted separately to Hammarskjöld on 14 January, before the Israeli government's decisions were passed on (see no. 311; see also Eban to Herzog, NWTA272, 14 January 1957, 130.02/2459/14).
3. Kidron replied to this telegram on behalf of Eban, saying that the three provisions set out for withdrawal from Egypt were unrealistic. Attainable goals would be:
    1) A statement by the U.N. secretary-general that UNEF is to be stationed in Sharm el-Sheikh as long as its duty is to thwart hostile acts;
    2) Inclusion of this statement in the secretary-general's report to the General Assembly;
    3) Ratification of the report by Assembly resolution (see Kidron to Herzog, NWTA267, 12 January, 1957, 93.01/2186/4.)
4. The proposals regarding Gaza were as follows:
    1) Israel would be in charge of maintaining security in the Gaza Strip. This duty would be performed by the Israel Police together with the local police; military forces would be withdrawn from the Strip;
    2) Israel would be responsible for all services for the local population relating to agriculture, commerce, health, employment, education, water and electricity supply. Additionally it would assist in development plans;
    3) U.N. representatives stationed in the Gaza Strip would report to the General Assembly on the situation there;
    4) Israel would assist and facilitate activities carried out by UNRWA;

5) The U.N. would prepare a practical plan for settling the Arab refugees, including the Gaza refugees, and Israel would be prepared to contribute to its implementation as best it can;
6) Israel has no intention of annexing the Gaza Strip.

(See Herzog to the Israel embassy in Washington, TNW 990, 12 January, 1957, 130.02/2459/14; see also Eytan to the Israeli missions abroad, Coded Circular Tel. 714, 13 January 1957, 130.09/2377/5.)

301. G. Rafael (Washington) to J. Herzog. 12 January 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA179; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

In a conversation between Bunche and Rafael, the former elucidated his statement in their previous talk[1]:

1) Owing to pressure from numerous delegations, the secretary-general had begun searching for a way to prevent a crisis over the Sharm el-Sheikh issue. He agrees that UNEF should be posted there to ensure freedom of navigation.
2) The secretary-general is prepared to submit a "constructive report" to the General Assembly at its upcoming meeting, on condition that by then Israel would announce its readiness to complete the evacuation of Sinai and not declare its conditions for evacuating Sharm el-Sheikh publicly. However, since the withdrawal from there is still affected by the issue of freedom of navigation and the danger of resumed hostilities, he will invite the Assembly to Authorise UNEF to remain there as long as the threat exists. He is also prepared to say that he has not yet dealt with the Gaza issue and that there is no need to press the issue further.

Rafael stressed that Israel's insistence on the Sharm el-Sheikh issue is not contrived but rather constitutes a basic position that will not be altered in exchange for vague, non-binding assurances. Only in the event that an absolute commitment is proposed is there a prospect that the Israeli government will seriously consider a solution.

In reply, Bunche suggested that Israel secure itself following the evacuation of Sharm el-Sheikh by occupying Tiran Island, since, with regard to the island, no issue of Egyptian sovereignty would be raised,[2] and from there Israel would be able to foil any scheme plotted by Egypt. They also discussed the possibility of a U.N. naval patrol serving as backup for UNEF stationed in Sharm el-Sheikh and an Israeli force stationed on Tiran Island.

Notes

1. No. 294.
2. In January 1950, Egypt, with the consent of Saudi Arabia, seized control of the islands of Tiran and Sanafir, which were under Saudi sovereignty at the time.

302. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 12 January 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA265; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

In a conversation between Bunche and Kidron, the former made a suggestion for resolving the Gaza issue. His proposal is based on his confidence that UNEF is capable of preventing Fedaiyun activities originating in Gaza and that UNEF would not hesitate to use force to do so.

However, UNEF entry is contingent on the evacuation of the IDF, as both forces cannot occupy the same location. Bunche does not propose that the IDF pull out entirely from the Gaza Strip; the main objective here is to demonstrate movement of the Israeli troops and compliance. Nonetheless, preceding the evacuation, the Israeli government must secure its rights in all matters requiring clarification. Namely, it should state that the IDF would reoccupy the entire Gaza Strip if an Egyptian military force or civil government were to enter or UNEF to withdraw prior to reaching a reasonable arrangement.

Kidron voiced his doubts over the plan's effectiveness. The best guarantee for preventing the Fedaiyun from operating is to leave an Israeli force in the Gaza Strip. Because UNEF is an international force, it would not be capable of maintaining order. Kidron promised Bunche to convey his proposal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

303. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 12 January 1957

Coded Tel. WIA154; Inc.: 130.02/2459/14

Summary

Eban and Shiloah talked with Murphy, who agreed with their approach and promised to talk with Dulles and Lodge. According to Murphy, Dulles told him that Israel had a cast-iron case regarding freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran

but did not draw any practical conclusions from this statement. Murphy inquired what the U.N. could do to provide a guarantee and the Israelis replied as stated in telegram 985.[1] They said that in addition to the statements the U.N. makes, it is essential that the U.S. and other maritime powers stress their unremitting interest in the freedom of navigation through the Straits and express their active objection to any kind of reimposed blockade. Eban is waiting to hear about Dulles' response as well as his instructions to Lodge.

Murphy underlined that the wording of Israel's statement to Hammarskjöld is of key significance to the issue. Eban and Shiloah recommend that Israel's position as accepted by the government remain unchanged,[2] but that the statement to Hammarskjöld would merely note that:

1) Israel will complete its withdrawal from Egyptian territory by 22 January, in compliance with the 2 November resolution and its own declaration of 8 November.[3]
2) As for the military position at the entrance to the Straits of Tiran, Israel will state that owing to the crucial national and international interests involved in this issue, it will discuss with the secretary-general a solution that would conform to both the 2 November resolution and other crucial U.N. trends.

In addition to the abovementioned statement, which will be published, an explicit proposal should be made formally to Hammarskjöld concerning the nature of the assurance required of the U.N. — that is, the stationing of UNEF in Sharm el-Sheikh (or a U.N. naval patrol in the Gulf of Aqaba) pending an agreed and effective final settlement for the prevention of obstruction to navigation. It should be endeavoured to obtain a guarantee for freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal in parallel, but not as a prerequisite, to withdrawal from Sharm el-Sheikh.

Regarding Gaza, Eban proposes to submit to the secretary-general a proposal for an interim arrangement as follows:

1) Israel would withdraw its military forces in compliance with the 2 November resolution.
2) Civilian services, including local and Israeli police, would continue to operate without prejudice to the final settlement.
3) UNRWA activities on behalf of the refugees will go on, in close cooperation with Israel.
4) The jurisdiction of the local authorities would be preserved and the autonomous local authority would be strengthened.
5) Israel would add a practical proposal for absorption of refugees and rehabilitation of the permanent population.
6) Discussions would be held with the secretary-general on the U.N.'s status in Gaza.

Nothing in this plan could be construed as a waiver of any of Israel's stands, and it may even help to bolster its status in the U.N. and in world opinion.

Notes

1. This telegram states: "The prime minister and the foreign minister are of the opinion that should friendly delegations inquire how the U.N. could uphold freedom of navigation, the reply, according to the Assembly resolution, should be that UNEF will remain stationed in Sharm el-Sheikh pending a peace agreement" (see Herzog to Eban, TNWA 985, 11 January 1957, 130.02/2459/14).
2. No. 261.
3. See no. 79.
4. See no. 306.

304. Z. Argaman (Washington) to J. Herzog. 12 January 1957

Coded Tel. 157; Inc.: 130.02/2459/8

Summary

Argaman reports on the conversation between Dulles and Pineau.[2]

The Suez Canal

Pineau asserted the need to reach an arrangement for the Suez Canal prior to its activation and completion of its clearing. He stressed that any arrangement concerning the Canal must explicitly include granting the right of passage to Israel.

Dulles said that he views France's stand in a constructive light and that the United States will take action to push for an arrangement in this spirit. He agreed with Pineau that freedom of navigation for Israel should be ensured within the framework of the agreement. The problem here lies with Egypt's intransigent standpoint, and a way must be sought, by means of an explicit U.N. resolution or by other means, of forcing Egypt to accede on this point.

Sinai Peninsula

With reference to the issues of the Straits of Tiran, Gaza and the Fedaiyun, Pineau stressed that France is deeply concerned about the pressure being put on Israel to withdraw from both Sinai and Gaza without prior assurances. Pineau said that without such assurances, Israel will not be able to evacuate the area under any conditions, even if it faces the risk of sanctions. France endorses Israel's stand in the matter unreservedly.

Dulles acknowledged the justice of Israel's demand for guarantees for freedom of navigation. He undertakes, together with Hammarskjöld, to devise an appropriate formula. Similarly, the United States is going to great lengths to defer tabling of the draft resolution against Israel for as long as possible. As Dulles views it, a solution

could stem from giving a broad interpretation to the U.N. force's role, which would ensure the freedom of navigation pending a full settlement.

The conversation was amicable and very much to the point, and the French believe that U.S.-French relations have taken a turn for the better.

Notes

1. François de Laboulaye, second secretary in the French embassy in Washington.
2. The conversation was held on 11 January. See *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 15, pp. 21–25.

305. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 13 January 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA271; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Eban reports on a conversation with Hammarskjöld. The secretary-general expressed his wish to give a positive note to his report to the General Assembly, and stressed the significance of the wording of Israel's next statement on the progress of the withdrawal.[1] Eban said that he knew of the government's decisions only in general outline; however, he believes that the statement will comply with the trend outlined by the secretary-general.

Eban said he wanted to use the occasion to get an idea of the secretary-general's views on the issues. He inquired whether the secretary could propose that a U.N. force be stationed in the Gulf of Aqaba to prevent acts of hostility pending achievement of a peace agreement, or guarantees by the Powers or an agreement between the littoral states.

With regard to setting out special provisions for the stationing of UNEF, Hammarskjöld broached the question whether such an initiative should come from the secretary-general or the General Assembly and argued against putting the entire burden on his shoulders.

Eban expounded on the decline in the U.N.'s reputation in the event that the blockade was reimposed and a war ultimately broke out which could have been avoided. Hammarskjöld replied that there was no disagreement between them about the direction; the problem was to decide on approaches, methods and procedures.

As for Gaza, Hammarskjöld said he had heard of the proposals made by the foreign minister to numerous delegations, but he fails to see how the continued presence of the Israeli force in Gaza could be accepted. He suggested deferring the issue further.

During the course of conversation, Hammarskjöld received information from UNTSO Chief of Staff Leary that Israel was demolishing facilities and apartments in El-Arish. Leary noted that if this were verified, it would mean that Israel is in breach of a clear-cut, express assurance it had submitted to him in writing.[3]

Notes

1. Hammarskjöld deferred issuing his report to the General Assembly until decisions had been made by the Israeli government.
2. See no. 191, note 2.
3. In response to this claim, Herzog wrote to Eban: "Burns also telegraphed Dayan with regard to the demolition of facilities and apartments in El-Arish. This information is totally unfounded, so please deny it immediately to the secretary-general and add that since our previous assurances, no violation has been committed whatsoever. Tekoah is immediately approaching Leary to protest the distorted report and to request that he reveal the source he relied on for sending it" (see Herzog to Eban, TNWA3, 14 January 1957, 93.07/2186/4).

306. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 13 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNW999; Outg.: 130.02/2459/2

Summary

Herzog relays to the delegation the Israeli government's decisions[1]:

1) **The Gulf of Aqaba**
   a) The IDF will evacuate the coast of the Gulf of Aqaba immediately following the assurance of freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran and in the Gulf of Aqaba.
   b) Guarantees
   Israel demands guarantees for its withdrawal — either the signing of an agreement between the four countries located on the coast of the Gulf for freedom of navigation, or a U.N. decision to station UNEF along the coast pending establishment of peace between Israel and Egypt or another accepted arrangement for the freedom of navigation, or effective guarantees furnished by several great powers. Both Nasser's assurance and a U.N. resolution are insubstantial, since Nasser has previously violated sections of the U.N. Charter and the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and will not hesitate to repeat such violations in the future.[2]

2) **The Suez Canal**

Israel demands viable guarantees for freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal and for vigorous action on the part of the secretary-general and the Great Powers to ensure this.

3) **Gaza**

Israel will maintain its control over the Gaza Strip and will be responsible for both external and internal security, although it will not keep military or police forces there. Israel will continue to uphold and develop an autonomous administration run by the inhabitants and will grant UNRWA all possible facilities bearing on the latter's activities for the refugees. Similarly, it will continue to ensure all public services to the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip. Israel will agree to appoint a U.N. observer to Gaza.

A U.N. force in Gaza will not prevent organisation of Fedaiyun troops by Egypt and their operation in Israeli territories, and its entry into Gaza may cause deterioration in the security of the adjacent Israeli settlements, as well as in any other Israeli territory.

4) **Refugees**

Israel appeals to the United Nations to prepare a plan for a permanent solution to the refugee problem, including the Gaza refugees; the Israeli government will contribute to resolving the issue as best it can.

5) **Sinai**

Excluding two or three non-Egyptian outposts (El-Arish, a(l)-Tur, the Santa Caterina monastery), the Sinai desert contained no settlement. During the eight years Egypt controlled Sinai after 1948 it did not attempt to resettle the refugees from Gaza there, even in areas that had water, but instead turned Sinai into a military base for launching an offensive against Israel. The government of Israel appeals to the United Nations to declare the demilitarisation of the entire Sinai, or at least the half that borders on Israel, in order to prevent all military dispute between Israel and Egypt.

Israel objects to the restoration of the status quo ante, which could cause renewed fighting in the Middle East.

Notes

1. The minister of foreign affairs arrived in Israel at Ben-Gurion's request in order to take part in the government meetings held to consolidate Israel's position and formulate its demands in the upcoming U.N. Assembly session (see no. 285). Meir opened the government meeting of 13 January with a review of the positions of the United States and Hammarskjöld's towards Israel's demands with relation to the completion of its withdrawal from Sinai. Ben-Gurion himself formulated the decisions discussed in the meeting and ratified there (see stenographic report of the government meeting, 13 January 1957, in file 77.0/9/33).

2. The draft proposal on the issue of freedom of navigation and on the provisions and guarantees demanded by Israel was adjusted to conform to Eban's proposal (see no. 303).
3. See no. 308.

307. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 13 January 1957

Copy: 130.02/2459/2

Summary

Ben-Gurion commends Eban for his efforts and for his powers of persuasion. In addition to the government decisions, which are being sent to Eban by Herzog,[1] Ben-Gurion stresses that the best guarantee for preserving freedom of navigation in the Red Sea is the stationing of the IDF on the coast of the Gulf of Aqaba. The IDF will remain there despite the General Assembly resolution, since Israel acknowledges the supremacy of justice, not the U.N.'s formal authority. The public should be told the truth: that on this issue, Israel would not comply with the resolution if it did not ensure its freedom of navigation.

In addition, Israel rejects any resolution on withdrawal to the armistice demarcation lines, as the armistice agreement with Egypt no longer exists and any resolution based on it is null and void in the eyes of Israel.

Note

1. See no. 306.

308. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 13 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA1000; Inc.: 93.07/2186/4

Summary

Following the Israeli government's decision,[1] Herzog gives Eban details of the steps decided on by Ben-Gurion and Meir:

1) Submission of a written statement to Hammarskjöld concerning the evacuation of Israel forces from Sinai. Ben-Gurion and Meir object to mention of the

2 November resolution and Israel's declaration of 8 November,[3] since the former deals with the armistice agreement, while Israel rejects it.

2) Submission of proposals to the secretary-general: care must be taken to comply with the proposals as formulated by the government.
3) A way should be found formally to present the demand for freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal and for the demilitarisation of Sinai, or at least East Sinai.
4) Proposals concerning Gaza [...][5]
5) Eban should decide, after considering the circumstances, whether at this point proposals should be made on the issue of Gaza, the refugees and the status of the U.N. in Gaza.

Notes

1. No. 306.
2. No. 303.
3. See no. 78.
4. The post overlooking the entrance to the Straits of Tiran. See no. 303, section 2.
5. The passage that was deleted here includes the details of the proposals on the future control of the Gaza Strip, as given in no. 300, note 4.
6. Eban replied to this telegram that since the Assembly's upcoming session has been postponed by several days, he would merely submit the statement contained in the telegram to the secretary-general, so that he could include it in his report. The complete plan concerning the Straits will be submitted shortly before the Assembly is convened. Eban maintains that, for the time being, the Gaza issue should not be discussed with the different governments, since UNEF will not even reach the border by the 22nd of the month. There is no urgency for the U.N. in dealing with the Gaza issue before completion of the evacuation of Sinai (see Eban to Herzog, NWTA272, 14 January 1957, 130.02/2459/14).

309. P. Sapir (New York) to L. Eshkol. 13 January 1957

Coded Tel. 307; Inc.: 130.09/2333/5

Summary

Sapir reports on the conclusion of negotiations with the Bank of America on a loan to Israel. The talks were tedious and unpleasant.

Israel had made a request for forty million dollars over two years. Following consultation with several members of their credit committee, the bank agreed on thirty million dollars, of which twenty would be transferred immediately, another five million after three months and an additional five million after six months;

repayments are in eighteen equal monthly installments. This conclusion will be brought before the credit committee for final approval. In the event that a positive answer is given, it would be contingent on two conditions:

1) That the money does not serve for the purchase of weapons.
2) That word of the loan itself is not leaked to the press.

The first condition is required vis-à-vis the State Department and the second – apparently, due to the bank's business in Arab countries. Therefore, Sapir emphatically demands that no information about the negotiations with the bank is made public.[1]

Notes

1. The bank directorate decided to advise Israel to wait with the loan request until the clarification of the political situation in the region. If Israel insisted on an immediate decision it would be offered a loan of 28.5 million dollars only, in several installments. Sapir thought that the bank's decision was guided by the State Department and that the proposal to Israel, bad as it was, had been given in the hope that Israel would reject it. In consultation with Meir, Eban and the delegates of the mission to the U.N., it was decided to reject the proposal and inform the bank that Israel was leaving the matter undecided (see Sapir to Eshkol, Tel. 333, 17 January 1957, 130.09/2333/5).
2. British Prime Minister Eden resigned from the premiership on 9 January and ascribed his resignation to his failing health. Harold Macmillan, who had served as chancellor of the exchequer under Eden, was appointed in his place.

310. T. Kollek (Jerusalem) to the Prime Minister. 13 January 1957

Copy: 130.23/3088/4

Summary

1) Kollek maintains that Israel is on the verge of a major clash with the U.N. and with the United States. As a consequence, economic sanctions could be imposed on Israel, in addition to those already enacted in effect by the United States. One of the risks is that the United States would forbid the transfer of monies from the United Jewish Appeal and the Israel Development Bonds and would freeze the German reparations as well.
2) Temporary sanctions could bring about two results: unity in Israel and willingness to tighten belts and enormous public sympathy abroad — in Europe, in some parts of Asia, in Latin America, in Canada and also in the United States itself.

3) On the other hand, this state of affairs may bring about a clash between U.S. Jewry and the U.S. Administration. It is impossible to foresee whether in this event U.S. Jewry will displays the courage necessary for keeping up the tradition of steadfast support for Israel.
4) In order to stand firm on both the internal and external fronts, the most effective weapon is a public relations campaign. Even the best campaign cannot change U.S. policy; it can, however, possibly prevent damage to the U.J.A., the Bonds and the reparations. In Israel too, propaganda can help to bring the people to a strong and unified front, considering the sacrifices and efforts that would be required.
5) This necessitates planning ahead. Kollek proposes to set up an ad hoc committee to make proposals for handling the issue, whose members will be Moshe Pearlman, Jacob Herzog, Ehud Avriel, Giora Josephthal and Kollek himself. This committee should submit its proposals within 48 hours.

311. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 14 January 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA278; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Kidron summarises the conversation between Eban and the secretary-general, in which Bunche, Cordier, Rafael and Kidron himself also took part.[1]

Eban read out the following statement for the record and submitted it to the secretary-general:

"The government of Israel authorizes me to convey the following communication to the secretary-general of the United Nations:

By 22 January [the] Sinai desert will be entirely evacuated by Israel forces with exception of Sharm el-Sheikh area, that is, the strip on the western coast of the Gulf of Aqaba which at present insures freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf.

In connection with the evacuation of this strip the government of Israel is prepared to enter forthwith into conversations with the secretary-general."

Hammarskjöld and Bunche asked the following three questions:

What is the definition of Sharm el-Sheikh (in terms of the size of the area) and the western coastal strip? What about Gaza? What does the "Sinai desert" mean? Eban explained these points.

A discussion developed on the issues of Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza. The secretary-general maintained that there is a contradiction between Israel's demand for guarantees and the General Assembly's demand for evacuation without

preconditions. It was eventually agreed that an additional meeting be held the next day[2] to discuss Israel's detailed proposals for resolving the issues of the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba.

Eban mentioned that on 22 January UNEF will be stationed on the Israeli border. He wanted to know whether a broad separation would be ensured between UNEF and the Egyptian army entering Sinai. The secretary-general answered that an Egyptian civil government will enter El-Arish and that he would not view it as a contradiction if several small military units were to accompany it to ensure stability. No Egyptian forces would be stationed on the Israeli border.

Eban adamantly denied the reports on more demolitions in Sinai.[3]

It was decided to leave publication of Israel's statement on the evacuation to the secretary-general in his report.

Notes

1. The minutes of the conversation are in file 130.02/2448/7.
2. No reports on the additional meeting held with Hammarskjöld on 15 January were found.
3. See no. 305, note 3.

312. E. Najar (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Israel Embassy in Paris. 14 January 1957

Coded Tel. NPTA59; Outg.: 93.01/2185/9

Summary

Najar sums up the conversation between Eban, Sherman, Joxe and Georges-Picot on the oil pipeline:

1) Joxe said that the French government has approved in principle partnership with Israel on a 16-inch pipeline. The decision has been transferred to an inter-departmental committee comprised of representatives of the Ministries of Finance, National Economy, and Foreign Affairs. Joxe telephoned Paris and asked that the conclusions of the committee be sent to him without delay.
2) The plan for a 32-inch pipeline was presented to him by the Lazard investment bank as a private affair, which is at this time unrelated to the plan approved by the French government.
3) In reply to inquiries, Sherman reported that Israel is laying an 8-inch pipeline from Eilat to Beer Sheba, and a 12-inch pipeline from Beer Sheba to Sukrir (Ashdod). The aim was for a 16-inch pipeline in partnership with the French

to the same locations. Sherman claimed that there is another option — laying a 16-inch pipeline from Eilat to Beer Sheba and then to Haifa, thus avoiding Sukrir.

4) Joxe requested an estimate for the plans using a 32-inch pipeline.
5) Joxe took a practical interest in the oil pipeline plan. He inquired as to the prospects of obtaining oil from Iran, and was told that so far Israel has managed to obtain it and prospects will grow with the participation of new agents in laying the pipeline.
6) Joxe took a special interest in the question of the time required for completion of the project. He was told that this depends on the supply of pipes and pumps. He asked if France manufactures them and was answered in the affirmative. Sherman added that the time required is between 6 and 8 months, if the equipment is received without delay.

Note

1. Guillaume Georges-Picot, head of France's mission to the U.N. Assembly.

313. D. Sattath (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 14 January 1957

Orig.: 93.39/450/3

Summary

Sattath reports that Israel is following developments in the agreement between the Soviet Union and Poland on repatriation. A broad-based agreement would enable ten thousand Jewish families to go to Poland, and thence to Israel, virtually unimpeded. Some estimate that the number is thirty thousand. The question is what sort of legal interpretation will be applied to the term "repatriation." The Polish chargé d'affaires implied that priority will be given to those who were Polish citizens in 1939 and who have family in Poland. The same applies to prisoners. Gomulka's interpretation of the agreement was that everyone bound emotionally to Poland would be considered Polish, and this applies to Jews as well.

From past experience it can be inferred that the Polish embassy and consulates are accommodating and will make do with proof by testimony, and sometimes even proficiency in Polish suffices.

Notes

1. In this letter, Agmon chronicled the repatriation from the Soviet Union to Poland since its inception in 1956 and specified the categories of eligibility (see Agmon to the East European division, 26 December, 1956, 93.39/450/3).
2. Wladislaw Gomulka, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party. The joint statement of Khrushchev and Gomulka of 18 November 1956 included a paragraph about the repatriation of ex-Polish citizens from the Soviet Union to Poland. This was the second agreement on this subject between the Soviet Union and Poland. (The first was signed immediately after World War II.) The agreement applied to people who were Polish citizens on September 1939 and had been staying in the Soviet Union since the War, and in March 1957 this was extended to their families. The repatriation to Poland began in late 1956, and within this framework 40,000 Jews left the Soviet Union for Poland by the end of 1957. Most of the returning citizens (35,000) went on from Poland to Israel.

314. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 15 January 1957

Coded Tel. NWT277; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Kidron summarises the conversation between Eban and Lodge. Eban described the issue of the Straits of Tiran and particularly underlined the sympathy for Israel's demands for guarantees in the State Department and U.N. delegations as well. Lodge affirmed U.S. support, but stressed that he fails to see how a two-thirds majority in favour could be expected in the General Assembly on a resolution that includes guarantees for freedom of navigation and prevention of acts of belligerency. The only way that seems plausible to him is to include the guarantees in the secretary-general's report, which would be ratified by the General Assembly. Eban submitted to him the Israeli proposal[1] for an arrangement in the Gulf of Aqaba and suggested that for tactical reasons, such a proposal had best originate with the United States rather than with Israel. Lodge responded favourably.

Barco asked why something to a similar effect had not been formulated with regard to Gaza. He expressed his apprehension that remaining silent on the Gaza issue would impede prospects for success on Sharm el-Sheikh, as the two are inseparable, and the Arabs and Asians would concentrate their attacks on the Gaza issue. The Israelis explained that the issue is complicated and merits further scrutiny and therefore it is advisable to defer dealing with it by a few more days. The secretary-general too is of this opinion, and has the power to prevent debate by an appropriate formulation in his report. Lodge supported this position and has pledged to pursue the issue.

Note

1. In this telegram to Herzog, Israel's proposal for the deployment of UNEF along the western coast of the Gulf of Aqaba following withdrawal is set out. The force would remain there until another measure was agreed upon by the parties for ensuring the freedom of navigation and preventing belligerency in the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba (see Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations to Herzog, X 310, 14 January 1957, 93.01/2186/4).

315. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 15 January 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA279; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

In a conversation with Eban and Comay, Pearson related that the Americans had met with Hammarskjöld twice to try to bring him to include a clause in his report which would state that UNEF would be stationed permanently in Sharm el-Sheikh. Hammarskjöld hesitated and said that at this stage he will content himself with a factual report specifying which area has been evacuated and which still awaits evacuation, and will add that on Sharm el-Sheikh there is an issue of special international interest.

Lodge and Pearson had agreed on the following move: the Western delegations should be influenced to oppose any resolution or vote at the General Assembly for one week. During this week:

1) American-Canadian pressure on Hammarskjöld would be renewed.
2) An effort would be made to examine the issue of the Straits and decide it by a resolution to deploy UNEF with a special, defined and permanent mandate.
3) The Gaza issue would be postponed again due to its complex nature.
4) Should Hammarskjöld stand fast in his insistence, a separate Western resolution would be drafted and efforts would be made to gain sufficient backing for its approval.

Pearson expressed willingness to conduct the campaign. In his speech to the Assembly he is prepared to speak out against the narrow Indian-Egyptian definition of the role of the international force. In order to realise the plan, he proposes that Eban's speech to the Assembly be wide-ranging and detailed but moderate; and that as many delegations as possible would speak, mainly in favour of freedom of navigation and against reimposing the blockade, and would demand that a decision not be reached until the matter is clarified.

Eban and Comay maintain that Israel should follow the guidelines set out by Pearson, particularly in light of his statement that the Americans take a similar stand.

316. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division. 15 January 1957

Coded Tel. 466; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on a conversation between Cassin[1] and Malik during the latter's stay in Paris.[2]

1) Malik expressed his anxiety about the possibility of renewed war in the Middle East, as well as the threat of Soviet penetration. Hence his and Lebanese President Chamoun's wish to strengthen ties with the West. Apparently the purpose of his visit to Paris was a request for arms, which was granted.
2) Malik gave an account of his talks at the Vatican. Rome is closely following events in the Middle East and is better informed about them than any other European capital. Their outlook is pessimistic and they, too, are anxious about Soviet penetration.
3) While discussing the issue of an Arab-Israeli settlement, Malik said that at the present, a permanent settlement still cannot be imagined. Discussions should focus on creation of temporary provisions for a transitional period. Cassin commented that this idea poses a danger, as the "temporary provisions" may serve as the basis for the final settlement. For this reason they should not be based on a fundamental injustice that would later prove difficult to amend.
4) On the issue of refugees, Malik implied that Lebanon would back any arrangement that will not enlarge its Muslim population. Hence Cassin deduces that if Israel agrees to receive some of the refugees and to begin with those in Lebanon, Beirut might support an arrangement from which it could benefit.
5) Malik implied that Lebanon's refusal to be dragged into Nasser's anti-Western incitement was to a large extent the result of pressure from the Lebanese diaspora, chiefly from the large communities in East Africa, which pressured the Lebanese government not to sever its ties with France.
6) Cassin presented to Malik very firmly Israel's argument against restoration of the Egyptian presence in Gaza and the Gulf of Aqaba. He warned him that this may result in the resumption of the dispute which was causing Lebanon

so much anxiety. Following a legal debate, Malik admitted that the issue was political, not juridical.

Malik appeared to Cassin firm in his pro-Western position and moderate attitude toward Israel; however he seemed perplexed and helpless.

Notes

1. René Cassin, the French-Jewish jurist and thinker. Member of the French mission to the U.N. General Assembly. Coauthored the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. Lebanese Foreign Minister Charles Malik visited Rome, Paris and London en route to the U.N. General Assembly in New York. He met with the junior minister of foreign affairs, Gazier, in Paris, and with the new British prime minister, Macmillan, and with Foreign Secretary Lloyd in London for talks on the Israeli-Arab dispute.
3. See wording of the resolution in Editorial Note no. 11.

317. Y. Ilsar (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in Paris. 15 January 1957

Copy: 130.23/3102/18

Summary

Ilsar informs Tsur that the directorate of the Foreign Ministry has assigned Maurice Fischer to travel to Rome and Paris for a special mission among Catholic circles in both countries with a twofold objective:

1) To explain Israel's position on the freedom of navigation to circles close to the Vatican and in the Vatican itself and to enlist their sympathy and assistance.
2) To act towards strengthening relations with the Vatican and look into the question of establishing formal relations.[1]

Note

1. Fischer's mission was decided on as a result of an impression in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Vatican's attitude toward Israel had changed, on the basis of Vatican Radio broadcasts, articles in the Vatican newspaper *L'osservatore Romano* and the Pope's speeches. This change occurred during the course of the Sinai Campaign and was an expression of the Vatican's apprehensions about the threatening Communist-Islamic alliance (see Ariel, on behalf of Eytan, to Elath, 16 January 1957, 130.23/3102/18).

318. West European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 16 January 1957

Coded Tel. 190; Outg.: 130.09/2347/5

Summary

The West European division reports that the prime minister summoned French Ambassador Gilbert for a conversation on 15 January. He informed him of Israel's position concerning the Gaza Strip and the Gulf of Aqaba and raised the possibility that an embargo and sanctions may eventually be imposed on Israel. Ben-Gurion added that in such an event Israel may have to approach France with an application for a loan and assistance, and asked for his opinion. Gilbert replied that he believes France would grant the application. He will report to his government on the conversation.[1]

Note

1. See also entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 15 January 1957.

319. M. Galli (Paris) to M. Sherman (Washington). 16 January 1957

Copy: 130.06/1947/16

Summary

Gali reports on the situation in Paris in relation to the oil pipeline. Matters are beginning to enter a more practical stage[1]; an interdepartmental consultation has already been held, but progress is slow. Nonetheless, some can be seen, for example, the 16-inch pipe is now a concrete topic of discussion with the French. The French Ministry of Defence is taking a positive and practical approach to the plan of a "medium diameter pipeline" or "emergency pipeline"[2] and the Israelis are trying to capitalise on this approach in order to influence other ministries.[3] However the experts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are inclined towards the idea of a 32-inch pipeline that would be funded by private capital. It is obvious to them that the issue of supply in the case of a 16-inch pipeline (oil would arrive from Iran) is simpler than in the case of a 32-inch pipeline, but the last decisions made by the

OECE (Organisation Européenne de Coopération Economique) have increased their apprehensions over anything related to a decision on a French pipeline.

Notes

1. No. 312.
2. On this topic Nahmias wrote to Sapir: "In the face of the oil circles' opposition and the indecision of the Quai [d'Orsay, French Foreign Ministry], I have convinced our friends at the Ministry of Defence that the pipeline affair will materialise only if the Ministry of Defence takes execution of it upon itself. The defence minister would request the approval of his prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs to deal with the affair within the framework of his office. I am urging our friends to send an expert delegation to Israel as early as possible" (see Tel. PKA 120, 15 January, 1957, 93.01/2186/1).
3. Ramadier, the minister of economy in the French government, opposed taking part in the pipeline, arguing that this might threaten both the future oil supply to France and CFP, the French oil company, 35% of whose stocks were held by the French government. Mollet tipped the scales in favour of the plan, provided that it would be kept completely confidential (see Tsur to Bartur, Tel. 468, 13 January 1957, 130.09/2347/4).
4. The aide mémoire is in file 130.06/1947/16.

320. Editorial Note

A Further General Assembly Resolution on the Withdrawal of Israeli Forces (17–19 January 1957)

On 17 January, following a pause of four weeks, the U.N. General Assembly reconvened for a discussion of the situation in the Middle East. Two documents were placed before the Assembly: an interim report by the secretary-general and a draft resolution by the Afro-Asian bloc concerning the Israeli withdrawal. In his report, Hammarskjöld was content with a factual depiction of the withdrawal until then and noted that Israel had pledged to complete the evacuation by 22 January. As for Sharm el-Sheikh, it was stated that Burns and Dayan would have further discussions on withdrawal from that region; with respect to the Gaza Strip, the secretary-general stated that he had received no specific reports on Israel's policy there and that further deliberations with the Israeli delegates would be necessary.

In a draft resolution submitted by 25 member states of the Afro-Asian bloc, it was stated that Israel had disobeyed previous U.N. resolutions calling for immediate and full withdrawal. The original version of the draft proposal also included threats of sanctions against Israel (see no. 289) and drew strong opposition from Western delegations. Following Western efforts and pressure on the Afro-Asian bloc and a pledge to support a revised formulation, as well as reservations held by several of the Asian bloc members, the draft proposal was toned down and the sanctions

clause was removed. Instead the secretary-general was requested to carry on with his efforts to urge on the evacuation of Israeli forces, in compliance with the applicable U.N. resolutions and to submit a report on them within five days.

Following modification of the draft, the proposal was approved by the Assembly on 19 January by an overwhelming majority of 74 votes against the 2 votes of Israel and France, with Costa Rica and Cuba abstaining (see *The Political Struggle*, pp. 151–153).

GAOR Resolution, 1123, 11th Session 19.1.1957

The General Assembly:

Recalling its resolutions 997 (ES–I) of 2 November 1956, 998(ES–I) of 4 November 1956, 1002 (ES–I) of 7 November 1956 and 1120 (XI) of 24 November 1956,

Noting the report of the secretary-general of 15 January 1957.

1. *Notes with regret and concern* the failure of Israel to comply with the terms of the above-mentioned resolutions;
2. *Requests* the secretary-general to continue his efforts for securing the complete withdrawal of Israel in pursuance of the above-mentioned resolutions, and to report on such completion to the General Assembly, within five days.

321. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 17 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA332; Outg.: 93.01/2185/9

Summary

Eban reports that on arriving at the General Assembly, Pearson told him that in the light of the substantial revision of the Afro-Asian resolution as well as the removal of the threat of sanctions, Canada will vote in favour of the resolution, which is merely a repetition of the previous ones.[1] Other delegations had undertaken to follow suit, including Great Britain and the United States, which were both instrumental in watering down the proposal.[2]

Pearson added that the steps agreed upon with Israel[3] will continue, that is, to induce the secretary-general to speak on the stationing of UNEF at the Straits of Tiran pending a settlement, and should this attempt fall through, to draft a resolution in anticipation of the report that he will submit in a few days.

Eban reviews the stands and speeches at the General Assembly of various states which support Israel. In contrast, the Soviets had been bitterly caustic and hostile and had complained about the weakness of the Asian resolution.

It appears that Hammarskjöld had advised the Asians to moderate their proposal substantially so that the overwhelming majority could vote for it. Israel had initiated the distribution at the General Assembly of amendments intended to "express apprehension" and to force Hammarskjöld to report on steps for forestalling belligerency, but the impression is that the draft resolution which has emerged as the result of negotiation processes cannot be undermined.

Notes

1. See editorial note no. 142.
2. See editorial note no. 320.
3. No. 315.

322. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 17 January 1957

Coded Circ.Tel. 734; Outg.: 130.09/2339/15

Summary

Shortly before commencement of the political and propaganda campaign on Gaza, Tekoah voices a few thoughts in relation to the entry of the U.N. force to the Strip:

1) Only two options are feasible — either Egypt's re-entry or continued Israeli control. The present situation does not allow for a third option of establishing U.N. rule in the Strip. Israel's withdrawal will result in Egypt's re-entry. Entry of a U.N. force into the Strip cannot prevent this, unless a resolution is adopted at the General Assembly — which is virtually impossible given its present composition — that would explicitly prohibit re-entry.
2) Even if international U.N. rule were to be established in Gaza and Egypt were prohibited to reinstate its administration, or at least its troops, this regime would clearly be unable to prevent renewal of Egyptian influence, of Egyptian activities and agents, and organization of the population, overtly or covertly, for political or even military operations under Egyptian guidance.
3) Obviously, UNEF would be unable to forestall Fedaiyun activities, since this is a police issue rather than a military issue in the conventional sense, and it

would be unable to exert control over internal activity within the local and refugee populations.

4) Maintenance of security in Gaza necessitates that UNEF not enter. Its presence would shake the foundations of Israeli rule, which depends on the population's trust in its exclusivity and its full authority to maintain public order. Such a credibility crisis would undermine the prevailing tranquility and encourage acts of terror against the Israeli administration under Egyptian guidance.

323. D. Hammarskjöld to A. Eban (New York). 18 January 1957

Orig.: 93.03/306/5

Notes

1. See no. 208.
2. See no. 311.

324. D. Lewin (New York) to the Asian and African Division. 18 January 1957

Orig.: 130.23/309/23

Summary

Lewin reviews the transformations which the draft proposal of the Afro-Asian bloc had undergone:

1) The Egyptians had insisted on a very extreme draft resolution which contained condemnation of Israel, a date for withdrawal and imposition of sanctions. They were backed by all the other Arab states, but not by any other bloc member. Only Afghanistan and Indonesia were prepared to go with them all the way. Liberia, Japan, Ceylon, Iran, Thailand and the Philippines fought for Israel's interests. The Burmese hardly intervened; however, they did not express support for Egypt. The opposition to the draft resolution arose from within, and eventually the Egyptians accepted the advice given by the secretary-general, the Americans and the Indians to draft a more moderate proposal that would have the entire bloc's support.
2) The present situation is considerably different from the situation prevailing two months ago.

3) Lewin expresses optimism regarding the prospect of cooperation with the bloc. He maintains that much progress has been made towards Israel's objective — to bring about a split within the bloc on matters relating to Israel. The split is already in effect in the bloc's internal debates; however, it cannot be assumed that this divide would already be revealed during the course of the General Assembly session.
4) In anticipation of the imminent debate, it is essential that the delegates of the bloc's member states receive further directives from their respective capitals. If Israel wishes to exert prompt influence, it is necessary to contact all Ministries of Foreign Affairs in countries where Israel has a representative, in order to reinforce the moderate policy within the bloc.

Israel should not hope for further improvement in the draft. If the Americans and almost all the West Europeans accept the draft resolution presented to the General Assembly, it cannot be demanded of the Asians to go beyond this.

Notes

1. See no. 289; see also Editorial Note no. 320.
2. See Editorial Note, *ibid.*

325. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 18 January 1957

Coded Tel. 256; Inc.: 130.09/2321/6

Summary

In a conversation with Kirkpatrick, Elath brought up the issues of freedom of navigation[2] and the desirable government in the Gaza Strip[3] as suggested in the Ministry's directives, and also handed him an aide mémoire on the Gaza issue.[4] Later in the discussion, Elath inquired what stand Britain would take should there be a majority vote at the General Assembly for imposing sanctions on Israel following its non-compliance with the Assembly's resolutions.

Kirkpatrick replied that in his opinion, Britain would find it very difficult not to obey the resolution, particularly with regard to oil supply. If it did not do so, the result would be a halt to oil supply from the Arabs to the British oil tankers in the Persian Gulf.

At the end of the discussion, Elath made mention of Lloyd's pledge to supply jet engines and spare parts and ammunition for destroyers (warships)[5] and asked when

Britain intends to make good on this pledge. Kirkpatrick replied that he himself is attending to this subject.

In a conversation Elath held later with Ross, the latter reported that at the General Assembly a large group of delegations, including the British one, is being formed for the purpose of submitting a draft resolution which would contain the guarantees for Israel which are missing in the Afro-Asian proposal. On Gaza, he commented that insofar as Israel has no intention of annexing the Strip, there is room for discussing an arrangement on the basis of the proposals contained in the Gaza aide. As for the items pledged by Lloyd (who had cancelled a previous negative decision), Ross implied that things are not so simple. Under these circumstances, Elath believes that Lloyd's advisers at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, being unable to annul his decision, would resort to delaying its implementation.

Notes

1. See no. 282.
2. In this Coded Circ.Tel. (Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, no. 715, 14 January 1957, 130.09/2377/5), Eytan reiterated the directives that Herzog communicated to Eban (see no. 308).
3. See no. 300, note 4. Most of the aide mémoire is devoted to the Gaza Strip's place in Israel-Egypt relations from 1948 on and ends with proposals for its future management.
4. In this telegram, more detailed directives were transmitted to Israel's representatives for explaining Israel's stand on the withdrawal from Sinai, freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Gaza Strip issue (see Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, Coded Circ. Tel. 729, 16 January, 1957, 130.09/2337/5).
5. See no. 282.
6. See no. 283.
7. See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations, YA312, 20 January, 1957, 93.01/2185/9.

326. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 18 January 1957

Coded Tel. 478; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur talked with Pineau about the latter's meetings in the United States and the impressions he had formed.

1) His appreciation for the American change of direction is reserved. Although Dulles' attitude is more sympathetic, he had not made him any promises, either on the Middle East issue or on Algeria. Matters are ambiguous.[1] However,

Pineau believes that since the meeting of Congress, Democratic influence is discernible and obliges the U.S. administration to adopt a more accommodating policy. He thinks that Israel should intensify its pressure by means of the Democrats to ensure that its demands on Gaza and freedom of navigation are met.

2) Hammarskjöld is still unyielding and unchanged. However, concerning the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba, Pineau believes that even the secretary-general is inclined to acknowledge the need for efficient international action and the assurance of freedom of navigation.
3) There is no truth to reports of a unified Western position on the issues of Gaza and the Gulf. Rather, this is an American stand. France and Britain are in disagreement over the issue of the U.N. force in Gaza. The French government accepts Israel's stand and is prepared to back it unconditionally; nonetheless, Pineau repeats Mollet's request that Israel inform them immediately if it decides on any retreat from its proclaimed stand, so that France would not find itself defending a view that has already been abandoned.
4) Pineau appeared convinced that Israel would manage to win the struggle. He stressed again that, ultimately, the General Assembly resolutions are merely recommendations. To Tsur's inquiry as to France's stand in the event that sanctions are imposed on Israel, he replied that he, as foreign minister, would push for maximum assistance by France, but this matter should be discussed with Mollet. He is sure that the latter's view would also be favourable.
5) Tsur mentioned the dire state of negotiations on the pipeline and did not receive a satisfactory answer.

Notes

1. See no. 304.
2. See, for example, no. 276.
3. See no. 318.

327. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan. 18 January 1957

Coded Tel. 76; Inc.: 130.09/2358/1

Summary

Sasson gave the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs several notes and a memorandum on the situation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip. He also held talks with Foreign Minister Martino and senior Ministry officials.

1) The minister said that their delegation to the United Nations has directives to support Israel's demands for free navigation through the Suez Canal and for preserving the international nature of the Gulf unconditionally; however, they would not oppose stationing a U.N. force in the Gulf to enforce this. As for the Gaza Strip, their delegation would oppose return to the status quo ante.
2) Rossi Longhi, the secretary-general of the Foreign Ministry, said that the Italian delegation would be unable to reverse its vote in favour of the 2 November resolution. It would, however, oppose return to the status quo ante in relation to Egypt and support Israel's demand for real guarantees for free navigation through the Canal and in the Gulf and cessation of Fedaiyun activity. Should the need arise, the delegation would support transferring the entire Gaza Strip to U.N. forces, on condition that their evacuation would not be dependent on Nasser's decision.
3) Straneo told him about fierce disputes with the Arab representatives in Rome, who demanded Italy's unreserved support for the 2 November resolution and threatened not to operate the Suez Canal or to repair the oil pipelines in Syria. He added that they explained that such support is out of the question.
4) Magistrati revealed that there is a Canadian proposal to enlarge the U.N. force and deploy its troops permanently along Israel's borders with Egypt, Jordan and Syria, in order to prevent clashes and to deprive the Arabs and their supporters of the claim that Israel constitutes a threat to the security of the Arab countries and the integrity of their borders. Italy will support this proposal.
5) Colonna explained that Italy and the rest of the West have definitely decided to oppose any Arab or Afro-Asian proposal to impose sanctions on Israel should it refuse to withdraw its forces prior to receiving sufficient guarantees for its security and free navigation through the Canal and in the Gulf. They have confirmed reports that the United States sees eye to eye with this stand.
   He also added that directives have been transmitted to the Italian delegation to the U.N. to endeavour as far as possible to separate discussions at the General Assembly on issues related to the Gulf and those on the Gaza Strip; to prevent adoption of any new pro-Egyptian resolutions; to suspend adoption of any new resolution at all; to support Israel's demand for guarantees and to encourage any discussion intended to produce a fundamental settlement rather than a temporary one.[1]

Note

1. At the General Assembly session of 19 January, Italy supported the amended proposal of the Afro-Asian bloc. In a conversation Sasson held with Colonna, deputy director for political affairs at the Italian Foreign Ministry, he was told that the United States, Britain and Canada had pressured Italy to vote in favour, promising explicitly that the U.N. forces would not leave the Middle East before an arrangement for all the issues disturbing the region had been agreed. This arrangement would ensure stability,

settle regional disputes and counteract Soviet influence (see Sasson to Eytan, Tel. 79, 19 January 1957, 130.23/3091/8).

328. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 19 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNW27; Outg.: 130.09/2339/15

Summary

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sums up the responses from various countries to Israel's appeals to support its stand on the issues of Gaza, freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and granting of guarantees.

The countries responding favourably, several of which have pledged to support Israel's stand, are the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Turkey, Uruguay, Paraguay, El Salvador, Nicaragua and France.

Note

1. See no. 325, note 3.

329. Y. Shimoni (Rangoon) to W. Eytan. 19 January 1957

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 93.13/229/9

Summary

During a conversation with the director-general of the Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Shimoni realised that Burma's fundamental position had not changed: it would support proposals for a solution, if they were made by others, but would avoid taking the initiative, and would support further calls for immediate withdrawal.

On the issue of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, the director-general said that the world is beginning to show understanding for Israel's stand and sympathise with it; however, if Israel insists on holding onto Sharm el-Sheikh and the Straits of Tiran, it would lose this sympathy, give Nasser a political victory and eventually be forced to withdraw anyway. If Israel evacuates willingly, while issuing a statement that it trusts the U.N. to enforce freedom of navigation and this freedom is violated, Israel would naturally be forced to fight again to ensure its rights and only then would the world's sympathy lie with it.

Shimoni handed him the aide mémoire on the Gaza issue.[2] The director-general said that in his opinion, there is no chance that the U.N. or any member state would agree with Israel's position on Gaza. He will bring the aide mémoire before his government's Committee on Foreign Affairs, but does not believe it will be looked upon favourably. Moreover, he would be unable to recommend that his government accept the proposals. He believes that only U.N. rule is acceptable, and although he cannot force his government's hand, he believes that Burma would support such a proposal if it is made by someone else.

The conversation was held during the General Assembly deliberations, which had not yet concluded. But the fact that no state had suggested a positive solution, and that even the United States had supported unconditional withdrawal without an accompanying solution, certainly had its effect on Burma.

Notes

1. See no. 265.
2. See no. 328, note 1.

330. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 21 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA354; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Eban reports on the situation and prospects at the General Assembly.

1) **The Assembly**
   The West has achieved removal of the condemnations, threats and sanctions from the Afro-Asian draft resolution in exchange for its pledge to support the "moderate" resolution.[1] Thus its adoption has been predetermined.
2) **The stand of the West and the U.N. Secretariat**
   From talks with Hammarskjöld and Bunche,[2] it is evident that the U.N. and the Powers will not agree to define the duties of the U.N. force in a form that would satisfy the demand for freedom of navigation, without concurrent acceptance of the force's entry into Gaza.
3) **Anticipated activity**
   It appears that there is a Western plan on both the content of the solution and the anticipated moves:
   a) Hammarskjöld would report to the General Assembly.
   b) On the basis of several articles in Hammarskjöld's report, the West would propose a draft resolution that includes the following elements:
      (1) Withdrawal of Israeli forces.

(2) Stationing UNEF on the Egyptian side of the armistice demarcation line. The force's role would be to ensure disengagement and constitute a buffer until a settlement is reached.
(3) Israel would be required to allow the entry of UNEF into Nitzana, so that the buffer is not entirely on Egyptian territory.
(4) Stationing UNEF in Sharm el-Sheikh and along the west coast of the Gulf of Aqaba, in accordance with a special article in the General Assembly resolution, which would define the role of the force in this sector as prevention of acts of belligerency until a permanent solution is found for the navigation issue.
(5) In Gaza there would be a gradual transfer of civil government from Israel to the United Nations. Only by implementing this solution could the return of Egypt be prevented.
(6) During UNEF's stay, in pursuance of this plan, efforts would be made to resolve the issues of navigation through the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran permanently, and to make permanent security arrangements between Egypt and Israel.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 320.
2. No. 331.

331. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 21 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA355; Outg.: 130.02/2186/4

Summary

Kidron summarises the talk between Eban and Hammarskjöld on 20 January. Rafael, Kidron himself, Bunche and Cordier also took part.

The secretary-general raised two questions: what Israel's intentions are concerning the continuation of the withdrawal and what its proposals are on Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza.

On the issue of the Gulf of Aqaba, Eban replied that Israel is ready to evacuate the area; however, there are still questions related to the withdrawal that need resolving, in order to prevent resumption of the clashes. The secretary-general refused to address the issue of the Gulf without first knowing Israel's stand on the Gaza issue.

During the talk, deadlock between the parties was reached since the secretary-general insisted on linking the issues of the Gulf, Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza, and linking them to the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement. He maintained that the agreement could be transformed into an instrument for satisfying Israel's security demands. Implementation of the substantive articles of the agreement entails disarmament on both sides of the border, ending infiltration and raids and implementation of the Security Council resolution of 1951. Hammarskjöld asked how Israel would regard the issue of implementing Articles VII and VIII[7] of the agreement on a mutual basis enforced by UNEF, and how it would regard the stationing of UNEF at Nitzana, namely — stationing the force on both sides of the border.

To Rafael's question whether his plan for Gaza gives Egypt any status, he replied that Egypt has legal rights according to the Armistice Agreement; however, the issue could be settled through additional agreements.

During the entire talk, the secretary-general stressed that UNEF's entry into Sharm el-Sheikh is necessary for resolving both issues. It was agreed that Israel would state its stand in writing before the publication of his report. Following reception of these comments, the secretary-general will meet with the Israeli delegates again.

Notes

1. The minutes are in file 130.16/2959/16.
2. Menon, speaking at the General Assembly, claimed that UNEF's authority to prevent belligerency in the Gulf must be reduced as much as possible, even in the interim period before an arrangement was found that would ensure freedom of navigation in the Gulf.
3. See nos. 158, 181. See Hammarskjöld's clarification on this matter— no. 332.
4. See Editorial Note no. 45. See also no. 127, note 4.
5. Article VII in the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement deals with reducing the forces on both sides and with their withdrawal on both the western and the eastern fronts (see Vol. 3, Appendix E).
6. See Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations to Herzog, X310, 14 January 1957, 93.01/2186/4.
7. Article VIII of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement outlines the borders of the demilitarised zone on the frontier between both countries (see Vol. 3, Appendix F).
8. Bunche told Rafael that he had spoken with Fawzi and was under the impression that agreed arrangements for the prevention of acts of belligerency could be reached with Egypt. To that effect, the U.N. force would be stationed along the armistice demarcation line on the Egyptian side. In order to make this easier for the Egyptians, he will ask Israel to agree to the deployment of a token force in Nitzana alone, in apparent keeping with the contents of Articles VII and VIII of the Armistice Agreement. This plan will be approved by the General Assembly, in the secretary-general's opinion, with Egypt's acquiescence and with the support of the United States and the West including all of Israel's friends. As for Gaza — the U.N. will assume responsibility for administration,

while encouraging the local administration, with the aid of international technical assistance. The U.N. force will ensure security. There is no willingness to cooperate with the Israeli administration, and according to Bunche, there is no support for this even among the friendly delegations. He assumed that under such conditions, Egypt would relinquish its "rights" in Gaza to the U.N. (see Rafael to Herzog, XA356, 21 January 1957, 93.01/2186/4).

332. D. Hammarskjöld to A. Eban (New York). 21 January 1957

Copy: 93.03/3064/5

Note

1. Nos. 330, 331.

333. G. Meir (New York) to the Prime Minister. 22 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA366; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

The minister of foreign affairs explains that:

1) The aim of the discussion with Hammarskjöld was to urge him to determine the nature of UNEF and its role in Sharm el-Sheikh, particularly in light of the conflicting views on UNEF's role voiced at the General Assembly debate.[2] The secretary-general's evasions and his denial of favourable decisions he had made in the past only reinforce Israel's stand. Israel is explaining this development to the delegations and plans to explain it to Washington as well. In the last talk the secretary-general defined the Straits of Tiran as Egyptian territorial waters in which legal issues exist.

   The intention is to submit to the secretary-general, in writing, Israel's proposals on the issues of the Straits, the Gulf of Aqaba and Gaza, as decided by the Israeli government, in order to ensure that they are brought before the General Assembly in their original phrasing, not in the secretary-general's interpretation. There is no intention to make new proposals or to give consideration to his new plans.[3]

2) She assumes that the prime minister's speech in the Knesset will contain no negative phrasing that could be construed as non-compliance, something

which the secretary-general is anticipating. She asks him not to mention the secretary-general's new plans, which still have no status and will only get more publicity.

Notes

1. In this telegram Herzog announced a special government meeting to be held on 22 January in the evening, to discuss the proposals made by Hammarskjöld in his last meeting with Eban and Ben-Gurion's intention to speak the following day in the Knesset and give details of Israel's proposals on Sharm el-Sheikh and on Gaza (see Herzog to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations, TNWA36, 22 January, 1957, 93.01/2186/4).
2. See no. 330, note 2.
3. See no. 330.
4. See no. 334.

334. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 22 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA37; Inc.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Herzog summarises the Israeli government's decisions of 22 January:
1) The government reaffirms its decisions of 13 January[3] and is determined to abide by them, however serious the consequences.
2) Israel's stand on the issues of Sharm el-Sheikh, the Gulf of Aqaba and Gaza should finally be submitted to Hammarskjöld (in view of his qualms on the status of the Gulf in his talk with Eban[4], it should be underlined in the aide mémoire that the Gulf is an international waterway) according to the government's decisions.[5] It should be stressed that Israel would not agree to entry of the U.N. force into Gaza.
3) In the interest of clarifying Israel's stand to public opinion before the secretary-general issues his report, it was decided that the prime minister would make an announcement in the Knesset. In addition, making a statement from the General Assembly podium or by a memorandum to the president of the General Assembly should be considered. The pervading feeling is that only by making clarifications in advance could friendly states be deterred from being party to an unacceptable resolution. In any case, public opinion should be prepared.
4) A letter to the secretary-general should explain why Israel views the armistice agreement with Egypt as null and void, while reiterating that Israel does not

maintain belligerency with Egypt, and a proposal should be made to make an agreement affirming non-belligerency. The issues of Suez, the Fedaiyun attacks, Egypt's systematic violation of U.N. resolutions, and the U.N.'s discriminatory attitude toward Israel should be emphasised.

5) With the aim of deferring adoption of another resolution at the General Assembly, proposals were made to appoint a U.N. committee to assess the situation and submit its recommendations to the Assembly; the possibility of Hammarskjöld visiting the area was also mentioned.

Notes

1. Nos. 330, 331.
2. No. 306.
3. See no. 330.
4. The proposals relating to the Gaza Strip in these telegrams (Herzog to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 13 January 1957, 16 January 1957, 130.02/2459/14) are identical to those in Coded Circular Tel. 714 — see no. 300, note 4.
5. See stenographic record of the government meeting, 22 January 1957, in file 77.0/9/33.

335. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog (Jerusalem) and A. Eban (New York). 22 January 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA85; Inc.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Shiloah reports on a conversation he held with Murphy, in which Bergus also took part. After giving them Israel's proposals to the secretary-general[1] Shiloah requested active U.S. support for these proposals. He remarked that there is no significant difference between Israel's approach to the issue of the Straits and that of various Western countries, apparently including the United States. Murphy did not demur. On the other hand, there was a gap between Israel's approach to the issue of Gaza and that of the other countries. Shiloah expounded on the risks inherent in transferring the local administration and political responsibility to a U.N. military force, but Murphy doubted whether sufficient support could be enlisted in the General Assembly for an arrangement that makes no provision for U.N. participation. He promised to examine matters, to talk with the secretary-general and to notify them promptly of any progress.

Note

1. See no. 340, note 1.

336. Meeting: S. Arad – W. Burdett (Washington, 22 January 1957)

Report: 130.23/3088/4

Summary

Arad reports on his meeting with Burdett to discuss the Eisenhower plan.[1] The State Department hopes that the plan will be approved in Congress by early February. Dulles has decided that James Richards, travelling in the capacity of a special ambassador, would explain the plan to the parties involved, with the intention of avoiding detailed explanations in Washington.

Burdett clarified one point bearing on the president's appeal to allocate 200 million dollars for the current year: no specific plans had been made for using this sum and the president's intention is that it would not be used for long-term economic projects, as previously, but for more immediate purposes.

Burdett also wanted to know how Israel defines legally the status of its relations with Egypt, following its announcement on the annullment of the armistice agreement. He commented that in this case Israel would not be able to rely on the Security Council resolution of 1951 on freedom of navigation, since this resolution relates to the armistice agreement. As the United States views it, Israel's right of navigation through the Suez Canal exists even without the 1951 resolution; however, it maintains that just as Egypt has no right to violate the 1951 resolution, so do neither of the parties have a right to annul the armistice agreement.

Note

1. The Eisenhower plan was also discussed in a meeting held by Arad on 23 January with Eli Stevens, the military-political advisor to Rountree. See report on the meeting in file 93.08/389/5.

337. G. Rafael (New York) to W. Eytan. 22 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA368; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Relying on British and American forecasts on the future of Jordan, Rafael suggests that Israel consider the imminent possibility of the partition of Jordan between Saudi Arabia and Iraq, backed by the United States and Britain.

He asks the following questions: how well-informed is Israel about the relevant chain of events? What steps should be taken to ensure that Israel is rewarded upon the dismemberment of Jordan?[4]

In the face of these possible developments, great importance is ascribed to Israel's stand on the issues of Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza.

Notes

1. On 19 January a conference was held in Cairo in which Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Jordan took part, to discuss the aid to be given to Jordan instead of the financial aid from Britain (see no. 282, note 4). Among other things, it was decided that King Saud should leave for the United States to explain the four countries' position on the Eisenhower Plan, the issue of navigation through the Suez Canal and relations with Israel (see report by the Research Division, 9 January 1957, 130.02/2459/9).
2. In a note sent on 16 January to the Jordanian government, Britain proposed to commence immediate discussions on the future of the agreement between the two countries. The spokesman for the British Foreign Office issued a statement on the dispatch of this note following the signing of the agreement in Cairo on the extension of financial aid to Jordan.
3. Following talks between the prime ministers of the Muslim members of the Baghdad Treaty held in Ankara on 20–21 January, a summing-up statement was issued which dealt with a number of subjects — regulation of navigation in the Suez Canal, the U.N. resolutions on Israel's withdrawal and the Eisenhower Plan for the Middle East.
4. The issue of Jordan's possible partition upon expiry of the British-Jordanian agreement was discussed in an aide mémoire by Palmon sent to Herzog, Tekoah and Lourie (undated, probably from January 1957, 130.15/3745/1). Following analysis of the possibilities for the division of Jordan between Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Syria, or between Saudi Arabia and Syria alone, Palmon reached the conclusion that such a division could not be carried out peacefully, as long as there was no agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on the Middle East, or as long as the latter was not ousted from the region. Nevertheless, preparations must be made for a situation where Jordan was partitioned by force and parts of it seized by Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. In such a situation, Israel would have to take control of the West Bank of the Jordan. This could not be envisaged without preliminary political activity that would assist in both seizure of the West Bank and its occupation.

Following discussions with Lourie, Tekoah and Herzog, Palmon reached the conclusion that Jordan did not face partition in the near future. Such a step would be unfeasible without the approval of the State Department or an agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iraq, which seemed impossible. The parties which aspired to swallow up Jordan were the same ones which ensured its existence, for fear that their rival would swallow up a larger portion (see Palmon to Rafael, Tel. 343, 28 January 1957, 130.15/3745/1).

338. Editorial Note

The Prime Minister's Statement in the Knesset on Government Policy (23 January 1957)

At its special meeting on 22 January, following the General Assembly resolution of 19 January on the issue of withdrawal, the Israeli government had reaffirmed the decisions it had made ten days earlier (no. 306) and authorised Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to address the Knesset on the decisions reached.

The debate was held in the Knesset the next day, and opened with a political survey by Ben-Gurion, who first gave a detailed overview of the government's decisions. Most of his address was dedicated to scathing censure of the United Nations for its biased attitude towards Israel since its inception and to challenging its authority in anticipation of the expected General Assembly resolution.

Following the political debate, the government proposed a resolution, which condemned the U.N.'s latest resolution of 19 January. The Knesset adopted the prime minister's political statement by a majority of 54 votes:

1. Israel would maintain control over the Gaza Strip and would be responsible for the Strip's internal and external security. It would continue to maintain and develop an autonomous administration run by the inhabitants, grant UNRWA all possible facilities for its activities for the refugees and continue to ensure all public services to the inhabitants.
2. The IDF would not evacuate the coast of the Gulf of Aqaba prior to the assurance of freedom of navigation both there and in the Red Sea, with substantial guarantees to be accepted with Israel's approval.
3. Israel would demand the demilitarisation of Sinai.
4. Israel would approach the United Nations requesting that it consolidate a plan for a permanent solution of the refugee issue, including those in the Gaza Strip, and contribute as best it can to this solution.
5. Israel would insist that in every solution concerning the Suez Canal, it would be granted freedom of navigation without discrimination.

Alongside the government's proposal, two other proposals were put to the vote. That of the Herut party stated that Israel would not agree to entry of a foreign force into the Gaza Strip; that the only guarantee for freedom of navigation in the Gulf

of Aqaba would be to maintain an Israeli force there; that the government should not have withdrawn the IDF forces from Sinai so long as no peace agreement with Egypt had been signed nor was freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal ensured; that the U.N. General Assembly resolutions have no moral force and injure both Israel's right to self defence and the interests of peace, and therefore Israel is not obliged to comply with them.

The Israel Communist Party resolution proposal called for evacuation of Israeli forces from all occupied territories and a withdrawal to the armistice demarcation lines.

Both proposals were voted down by a large majority.

See *Divrei Haknesset* (Knesset Reports), Vol. XXI, 1956–1957, pp. 826–851.

339. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 23 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA377; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Kidron summarises the meeting with Hammarsjköld and his staff after he had received the Israeli aide mémoire. The secretary-general expressed disappointment with it. In Gaza Israel demands that a U.N. force to be placed between the Strip and Egypt should protect it from the legitimate ruler, Egypt; in Sharm el-Sheikh it demands a peace settlement and neutralisation of Egyptian territory. Bunche asked whether these proposals should be seen as pre-conditions for withdrawal.

Eban repeated the definition that these are not preconditions but "accompanying circumstances." With regard to Sharm el-Sheikh, Israel is close to the position of the secretary-general as expressed in previous talks and that of many other delegations. With regard to Gaza, the Israeli plan is the first constructive proposal and no others have been offered. The secretary and Cordier replied that in the context of withdrawal there is no place for talk about plans for the future of Gaza. Similarly they cannot discuss the future disposition of Egyptian territory.

The secretary's staff asked for clarifications of the aide mémoire and particularly objected to sections in a document for publication mentioning opinions expressed by the secretary in confidential meetings. They asked if the sentence "Israel will make its full contribution towards any United Nations permanent settlement of the refugees" included any degree of return by the refugees. Eban refused to add or subtract anything from the statement.

The aide mémoire as it stands will be included in the secretary-general's report to be published before the next session of the Assembly. The secretary remarked that he approached this session "with dark foreboding." Bunche said after the meeting

that the secretary's negative reaction stemmed from his disappointment with Israel's attitude towards the presence of a U.N. force in Gaza, but he does not intend to criticise the aide mémoire in his report.

Note

1. After the meeting with Hammarskjöld on 20 January, it was concluded that Israel's position would be summarised in an aide mémoire to be submitted to the secretary-general before he issued his report to the General Assembly (see no. 331). In New York, Meir and Eban awaited directives from the government regarding the proposals to be submitted (see no. 333). After the special government meeting of 22 January, directives were transmitted to New York (see no. 334).
Hammarskjöld submitted the aide mémoire to the General Assembly on 24 January, and it was designated U.N. Document A/3511. The document appears in file 103.02/2448/13 and is not printed here.

340. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 23 January 1957

Coded Tel. 278; Outg.: 93.04/328/15

Summary

In a conversation with Shek, Lawrence from the Levant Department of the Foreign Office provided an outline of Britain's position in the coming debate at the U.N.:

1) The Gulf of Aqaba. Britain supports a resolution on withdrawal of Israeli forces from the coast which would include an article on entry of a U.N. force, in order to prevent clashes around the Straits pending a permanent solution. They would prefer one resolution that includes both articles, but perhaps the need would arise for two separate resolutions which would not depend on one another.
2) Gaza. They oppose both Egypt's return and Israel's continued occupation. They support the entry of a U.N. force and the establishment of a U.N. administration, which would rely on the local administration. To Shek's argument regarding the contradiction between these statements and their previous vote[1] he replied that in this way they have both prevented a resolution of condemnation and gained time for concerted action with the Canadians in preparation for the coming debate. Lawrence avoided saying what their position would be in the event that a condemnatory resolution is introduced.

With regard to Gaza, Lawrence also said that even if they were to concur with Israel's arguments, it would be impossible to obtain the General Assembly's consent for extending Israeli control over it. He admitted that their support cannot be relied on. There is a prospect of a form of U.N. administration which would enable economic cooperation with Israel. The only argument that made a positive

impression on him was the idea that Israeli control might bring closer a solution for the Gaza refugees.

On Jordan he said that Britain is evacuating Jordan since its stay there is currently pointless; the Cairo Treaty is without substance and it is unlikely that Jordan would receive monthly financial support as agreed.

Notes

1. In the vote at the U.N. General Assembly on 19 January Britain voted with the majority; see no. 321.
2. See no. 337.

341. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan. 23 January 1957

Coded Tel. 102; Inc.: 130.09/2358/1

Summary

During Sasson's visit to Magistrati, the latter showed him a telegram of directives to the Italian mission to the United Nations. The telegram said:

1) Italy does not support Israel's further control over the Gaza Strip and the Straits but identifies with its situation and backs its demands for guarantees to ensure freedom of navigation in the Gulf and the Straits and to prevent re-entry of Egypt into the Gaza Strip or resumption of the Fedaiyun operations by Egypt.
2) Italy insists that the U.N. force's roles be defined clearly and precisely and that it should be explicitly stated that the duration of its stay in Egypt and the Gaza Strip and the date of its evacuation are not dependent upon the will of Egypt or any other country in the region, but solely on that of the U.N.
3) Italy supports the idea that in any resolution adopted in the future it will be stated that the U.N. force stationed on the Straits will remain there pending a permanent arrangement regarding the freedom of navigation and will maintain it, and that the U.N. force to be stationed in the Gaza Strip will serve as a buffer between Israel and Egypt and will remain there pending a permanent solution.
4) The Italian mission is required to contact all friendly delegations and to coordinate its efforts with them.
5) Following the submission of the secretary-general's report and with the renewal of discussions at the General Assembly, it is desirable that the missions in

agreement with Italy's position pre-empt the Afro-Asians and submit a draft resolution in this spirit to the General Assembly.

Later in the conversation, Magistrati could not explain how those who demand the transfer of the Gaza Strip, including the civil administration, to a U.N. force envision the future of civil life in the Strip or its trade relations with the outside world. He claimed that the U.N. would undertake to settle these matters later. The key point for them is that the Egyptians should not return to the Strip, and that it should not serve as a base for the Fedaiyun and a source of clashes between Israel and Egypt or for disrupting order and stability in the region.

342. East European Division (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 23 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA959; Inc.: 93.01/2189/2

Summary

Transmits Avidar's report on his conversation with Semyonov, the Soviet deputy minister of foreign affairs. Avidar expressed his hope for improvement of relations but gained the impression that Semyonov rejected any such prospect, arguing that Israel is continuing its negative approach and that its interests coincide with colonialism. Given that Israel has not changed its approach, the Soviet Union's position towards it remains unchanged. They would not have supported Israel's establishment in 1948 had they foreseen its development. They regret the potential repercussions for Israel stemming from its policy, but it must undertake to mend its ways.

343. S. Rosenne and G. Wengenheim (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[1] 23 January 1957

Copy: 130.04/1872/4

Summary

Wengenheim and Rosenne of the Legal Bureau report on their visits to London, Paris, Washington and New York in connection with the claim filed against Bulgaria for shooting down an aircraft belonging to the Israeli airline, El Al.[2]

In view of the inaction on the Bulgarians' part and as a result of the deterioration of their relations with Israel after the Sinai Campaign, it appears that they have no serious intentions of putting an end to the affair, and extreme measures must be taken to persuade them to act. The steps needed in preparation for any drastic measure, including filing suit with the International Court of Justice in The Hague, should be coordinated with the other governments involved in the affair.

The Americans, British and French accepted Israel's political analysis and the discussion centred on the following key points:

1) **Additional diplomatic measures**

   All the governments involved are persuaded that the only feasible practical move is to file suit with the International Court of Justice; however, they all dwelled upon the need for additional diplomatic measures beforehand to discover whether the Bulgarians really do not intend to comply with the claim. It was concluded that each of the governments would forthwith submit a written memorandum to the Bulgarian government.

2) **The date for filing suit**

   The prevalent opinion was that the final decision on the subject should not be postponed and that the diplomatic measures should be hastened. Hence Rosenne and Wengenheim conclude that the decision on the subject will be reached around mid-February.

3) **Presence of all other governments at the hearing**

   Israel maintains that it is preferable, both legally and politically, that each government take its own measures separately and independently rather than in cooperation with the other governments, and that the line of action taken so far should be maintained — that is, not to create a kind of common front against the Bulgarians.

4) **Diplomatic arbitration**

   A question was brought up whether filing the claim would appear to the Bulgarians as so hostile a step as to frustrate any prospect for a settlement out of court, or whether it would encourage them to reach a settlement in order to avert an elaborate discussion of their actions in The Hague. The Americans and the French (as well as Dr. Jacob Robinson) were inclined to think that the lawsuit would exert sufficient leverage on the Bulgarians to induce them to begin useful negotiations. The British were more reserved but did not rule out this possibility.[4] In any event, the possibility that the claim could effect a compromise should not be a factor for preventing its filing, unless the Bulgarians' response to diplomatic measures were to bring about a substantial improvement in their position.

Notes

1. The report was also sent to the legal advisor to the government, to El Al Israel Airlines, to Dr. Jacob Robinson, to Eshel, the director of the East European division, to the Israel legation in Sofia and Israel's embassies in Washington, London and Paris.
2. On 27 July 1955 Bulgarian warplanes shot down an El Al passenger plane over Bulgarian territory; 58 passengers and crew members were killed. The following day the Israeli government notified the Bulgarian government of its intention to file a claim for damages against it. For 18 months contacts between the two countries dragged on with no definite outcome, and the legal adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Shabtai Rosenne, engaged in research into similar cases which could serve as precedents. Only in February 1957 did Israel draw up its claim against the Bulgarian government, and concurrently began to investigate the possibility of applying to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.
3. The passengers killed included U.S., British and French nationals.
4. On 29 January the British embassy in Israel notified the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the British government had decided not to file suit against Bulgaria at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. (The notification is in file 130.06/1872/4).
5. The remainder of the document was omitted by the editors. It deals with the claims against El Al and with the sums of compensation paid to the victims' families. It also includes a list of people with whom Rosenne and Wengenheim met in London, Paris, New York and Washington.

344. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 24 January 1957

Coded Circular Tel. 751; Outg.: 130.09/2377/5

Summary

Eytan sums up the situation at the General Assembly. Everyone is waiting for the secretary-general's report, following which the debate would take place. The Western delegations are working on various texts, none of which have been consolidated into a draft resolution. The Afro-Asians are apparently discussing a sanctions proposal.

The level of support during the coming votes, whether concerning condemnation or sanctions, cannot be inferred from the last vote. Numerous missions approved the last resolution for its moderation, in anticipation that the secretary-general would submit his own proposals to the General Assembly regarding the U.N. force's role in the Gulf and in Gaza. It is, however, becoming clear that the secretary-general, who wishes to avoid confrontation with the Afro-Asians and the Soviets, may refrain from submitting any proposals.

Eytan directs the Israeli representatives to approach the Ministries of Foreign Affairs on the following lines:

1) Further explanation on Israel's position on Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza (pursuant to Circular Tel. 729).[1]
2) A request that instructions be given to the missions to object to condemnation and sanctions resolutions or to any resolution that could harm Israel. Such a resolution would indicate that the U.N. is employing double standards. If the U.N. capitulates to Egypt's pressure, international law in the Middle East would be undermined, with repercussions for other countries that have stakes in the region or in free passage through its water routes.
3) In addition to activity in the ministries and in the U.N., they should continue to explain Israel's position to the newspapers' editorial boards and to public figures. A feasible option would be to call press conferences and to stress that freedom of passage and security in Gaza are matters of life and death for Israel.

Notes

1. The document from 16 January 1957 is in file 130.09/2377/5.
2. See Editorial Note no. 338.

345. M. Touval (Budapest) to the East European Division. 24 January 1957

Coded Tel. 554; Outg.: 93.01/2295/13

Summary

Touval, on his own initiative, met with Hungarian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Szarka in order to express his gratitude on the successful beginning of emigration from Hungary and to ask that the Hungarians make sure that their instructions for issue of passports for anyone intending to leave for Israel be followed regardless of that person's age. Szarka said that to the best of his knowledge 80 passports for Israel are issued daily and that altogether 2,000 have been approved since December. He pledged to take action to remedy the denial of passports to young people as well as to enable the emigration of people previously imprisoned for Zionist activity.

According to Touval's calculation, only 600 visas for Israel have been issued since December, and the substantial difference between the number of passports for Israel issued according to the Hungarian statement and the number of visas stems from the following reasons:

1) Some people were issued passports after their escape;
2) Some people are attempting to obtain visas for other destinations as well.

Notes

1. No. 241.
2. The affair remains obscure.

346. A. Eban (New York) to the U.N. Secretary-General. 25 January 1957

Copy: 93.03/3064/5

Notes

1. No. 332.
2. See Editorial Note no. 11.

347. A. Eban (New York) to the U.N. Secretary-General. 25 January 1957

Copy: U.N. Archives DAG–1/2.25.5.2:17

Notes

1. No. 188.
2. See Editorial Note no. 69.
3. See *Divrei HaKnesset* (Knesset Reports), Vol. XXI, 1956–1957, pp. 826–851.
4. Hammarskjöld replied that he had expressed his opinion on the armistice agreements in the latest report he submitted to the U.N. General Assembly, and in any event, violations of the agreement were made by both sides. In spite of the prevailing situation, he holds that the continuous legal validity of the armistice agreements is fundamental and cannot be ignored within the framework of efforts to establish normal relations between Israel and Egypt (see Hammarskjöld to Eban, 27 February 1957, U.N. Archives DAG–1/2.25.5.2).

348. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 25 January 1957

Coded Tel. 388; Inc.: 130.09/2333/5

Summary

Eban reports on his conversation with Pearson, in which Comay took part. Comay expressed Israel's expectation that Canada would object to any condemnation or sanctions proposal made by the Asians or others.[1] Pearson affirmed that Canada would not agree to any such proposal.

Eban explained Israel's plan for Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza and expressed his concern that the secretary-general would not offer any effective solution, seeing that he had retreated from everything he said at the inception of negotiations and had decided to delegate broad authority to the U.N. force in Gaza and restricted authority in Sharm el-Sheikh.

Pearson said that he had spoken with Hammarskjöld and is consulting with other states, including the United States. The tendency is to hold the discussion not on the basis of an Asian condemnatory proposal, but on the basis of a Western proposal that would offer guidelines for a solution, as follows:

1) The Straits: A resolution should be drafted that would appeal to the Gulf states to refrain from acts of belligerency against navigation in the Gulf and would station UNEF in Sharm el-Sheikh to monitor implementation of it, along with air patrols, pending another solution for freedom of navigation. The legal basis for this would be all parties' commitment under the armistice framework to refrain from acts of belligerency.
2) On Gaza, he refuses to agree with Israel's negative opinion of stationing UNEF in the Strip. Its presence there in place of the Egyptian army would give Israel greater security. He believes that the armistice agreement with Egypt is still useful, since it provides a routine of mutual relations that could serve to ensure Israel's security, if the U.N. adds to it freedom of navigation and prevention of attacks from Egypt.

Following a lengthy debate on the Gaza issue and on the armistice issue, Pearson was given an Israeli draft proposal for Sharm el-Sheikh which was not based on the armistice agreement. He implied that the Canadian delegation and others are active in drafting a resolution that would include the fundamentals that he had mentioned. Rumours of an Australian resolution persist in the General Assembly, and Eban plans to meet with Spender, the Australian representative, to discuss this issue.

During the conversation Eban said that the most effective solution for Sinai is the demilitarisation of at least its eastern part. Pearson agreed but nonetheless proposed that Israel consider demilitarising some territory on its side of the border, if only a small and unpopulated one. Eban objected and pointed out the geographical and

political differences between Egypt and Israel. Pearson argued that if moving the Egyptian army away from the border affords Israel relief in many places, it would do well to consider contributing to such a solution, especially as the arrangement in question is in the form of an agreement, rather than a concession.

Note

1. See Editorial Note no. 320.

349. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 25 January 1957

Coded Tel. TNW49; Outg.: 130.02/2459/10

Summary

Eytan reports that the Iranian ambassador in London told Elath that Israel now holds the fate of the Middle East in its hands. The region is doomed to fall into the hands of Nasser and his agents if Egypt gains the upper hand in the political struggle. According to another representative, Teheran has reached the conclusion that overthrowing Nasser is necessary for any settlement. These expressions reflect the atmosphere in Teheran as seen by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Eytan proposes that Eban meet with the Iranian representative to stress their common interests in relation to Nasser and assert that the fate of the region is really to a large extent in the hands of Iran and Turkey. They should attempt to break the vicious circle of bloc solidarity leading to votes that sabotage their own interests.

350. D. Lewin (New York) to the Asian and African Division. 25 January 1957

Orig.: 130.23/3093/23

Summary

Lewin reports on his meetings with representatives of several of the member states of the Afro-Asian bloc: Japan, Liberia, Iran, the Philippines, Ceylon and Burma:

1) This group undoubtedly feels good will towards Israel (and the position of Thailand and Ethiopia is similar). They do not wish to take part in making things

difficult for Israel by means of a severe resolution. Each of them explains why, nevertheless, it is difficult to come up with a proper solution to the situation at the U.N. which would accord with the November resolutions and also with Israel's needs, which they recognise.

2) They all recognise the right to freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba as well and are seeking a way to ensure it.
3) None of them accept Israel's claim that the questions of stationing UNEF in Sharm el-Sheikh and in Gaza are separate and unique issues.
4) Each one agrees that ways to ensure Israel's safety should be sought; none, however, are willing to go against Egypt.
5) Several of them think that only following Israel's withdrawal would they, together with other countries, be able to act for ensuring its safety, and are convinced that other delegations would cooperate. Should there be no withdrawal, they are considering the possibility of weakening the bloc's draft resolution or bringing it to the point where it would not present its own proposal, but affirm the secretary-general's conclusions; or, if the Arabs insist on a severe condemnatory resolution, they will vote together with another bloc, if one should exist.

Several of them (Burma, Japan and Liberia) want Israel to ensure that they receive express directives from their respective governments, since they dare not take it upon themselves not to support the bloc, even if Israel's welfare makes this necessary.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 351.
2. See Editorial Note no. 11.

351. Editorial Note

The Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly (25 January 1957)

In its resolution of 19 January 1957, the U.N. General Assembly required the secretary-general to report to it within five days on his efforts to hasten the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Sinai and the Gaza Strip in accordance with previous U.N. resolutions (see Editorial Note no. 320).

In his report, which was completed on 24 January and published the following day, Hammarskjöld rejected Israel's proposal for an arrangement in Sharm el-Sheikh and in the Gaza Strip and for UNEF's role in the implementation of the arrangement, as submitted to him in a aide mémoire following the Israeli government's decisions

of 22 January (see no. 339, note 2). The aide mémoire was attached to the secretary-general's report.

After he had explained the legal principles guiding his action, Hammarskjöld called for the return of the Israeli forces to the armistice demarcation lines and the revival of the armistice agreement so that it could be gradually converted into a non-belligerency agreement between Israel and Egypt.

Further on in the report, the following points were emphasised:

1) Israel cannot claim the Gaza Strip for itself and establish a civil administration there for the purpose of preventing renewal of the infiltration, as Ben-Gurion has proposed.
2) Israel is required to evacuate its forces from the Gulf of Aqaba. As for freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and through the Suez Canal, the secretary-general pointed out that their international significance necessitates recognition of the right to innocent passage of ships, but nevertheless claimed that there is a legal dispute in the International Law Commission as to what this privilege includes.
3) The U.N. force will be stationed on both sides of the border—both in the Gaza Strip and in the Nitzana region, which should be demilitarised. UNEF units that enter Sharm el-Sheikh will fulfil the same role as the other U.N. units, but it will be agreed that they will assist temporarily in ensuring the proposed "mutual restraint" between Israel and Egypt.
4) Maintenance of peace in the region is dependent on full implementation of the armistice agreement and it is incumbent on both sides to refrain from acts of belligerency.

The report avoided discussing the remaining articles of the 2 November 1956 resolution which had been adopted by the General Assembly and made a general statement that completion of the withdrawal and observance of the armistice would pave the way for further positive steps.

(The report was designated as U.N. Document A/3512. The document is in file 130.02/2459/10 and has not been printed here. See also *The Political Battle*, pp. 160–162.)

352. M. Comay (New York) to J. Herzog. 26 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA397; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Comay reports on his conversation with Pearson and his advisors, in order to hear his response to the secretary-general's report and his opinion on taking action at the

General Assembly.[1] Pearson described the report as positive, despite its cautious and ambiguous phrasing, since it is based on the principle that the U.N. must prevent reversion to the previous status quo and that the armistice regime must be established on a sturdier foundation.

He is trying to prepare a proposal which would gain the required majority at the General Assembly; admittedly, it would not answer all of Israel's requirements, but would at least offer it more security than before; the Egyptians could be persuaded to accept it and it would give UNEF a substantial and continuous role. He finds a basis for such a plan in the secretary-general's report.

The draft resolution he is considering will include the following articles:

1) An expression of regret that Israel has not complied with the resolutions to withdraw to the armistice demarcation lines, and another demand to do so immediately.
2) Mention of the secretary-general's report in a positive light.
3) Recognition of the need to ensure peaceful conditions following the withdrawal.
4) Renewed affirmation of the need for observance of the armistice agreement in its entirety by both parties.
5) The replacement of UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Organization) with UNEF for the purpose of monitoring and ensuring the armistice. The deployment of UNEF in the Gaza Strip and along the entire border. Non-entry of either party's forces into the UNEF deployment zone.
6) Evacuation of the Israeli administration from the Gaza Strip — the U.N. will assist and monitor the change of administration as well as monitor and take part in the new one.
7) With regard to the Straits and the Gulf of Aqaba, all governments with a stake in the matter will pledge not to obstruct freedom of navigation until the legal situation in the Gulf is finally clarified.
8) He has no wish to handle the freedom of navigation for Israel in the Suez Canal within the framework of the draft, but may possibly include the principle by making reference to the Security Council resolution of 1951 as an article in the preamble to the resolution.[3] Pearson said that he has yet to hear the final word from the Americans but expects their position to agree with these outlines.

Comay severely criticised the secretary-general's report and his attitude towards the proposals which Israel had submitted to him.[4] Pearson replied that as a friend, he must point out that none of Israel's proposals has full support from any party; he advises the government to consider carefully any proposed compromise before it places Israel in a state of complete deadlock with the U.N. and the possibility of considerable pressure from the United States and other countries. He emphasised the prospective achievements for Israel should his plan be accepted.

Notes

1. See no. 351.
2. See no. 72, note 2.
3. See *DCER 1956–1957*, Vol. 22, no. 230 , pp. 377–378; no. 231, pp. 378–380.
4. See no. 339, notes 1, 2.

353. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 26 January 1957

Coded Tel. WIA187; Outg.: 93.04/330/13

Summary

Eban reports on his conversation with Murphy,[1] with Shiloah participating. Eban severely criticised Hammarskjöld's report for its convoluted phrasing and distorted legal hypotheses and argued that its aim is to prevent an arrangement in Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza. He presented the list of statements which Hammarskjöld had made in the past on freedom of navigation and which he now opposes.[4]

Eban justified the plan that Israel had submitted,[5] despite the legal difficulties in Gaza. If the United States still does not identify with the plan, it is important that it does not reject such a possibility as Hammarskjöld did.

Murphy said that there is no substance to all the talk on sanctions and the Asians know that they stand no chance in the matter. The United States is working with the Canadians and the others for assembling a constructive proposal.[6] He attaches greater significance to the Straits, because of the long-term interest, than to Gaza, whose practical value is doubtful.

Murphy took an interest in the oil pipeline plans and inquired about the deadlines for completion and how negotiations with Iran are proceeding.

Notes

1. Compare *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 40, pp. 61–63.
2. Dulles appeared before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in its discussions on the Eisenhower Doctrine for the Middle East.
3. See Editorial Note no. 351.
4. See no. 346.
5. See no. 339.
6. See no. 352.

354. M. Alon (Ankara) to the West European Division. 26 January 1957

Coded Tel. 684; Inc.: 130.23/3125/5

Summary

In a meeting with Birgi, the director-general of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Alon listed Israel's demands on freedom of navigation in the Straits and the Gaza Strip.[1]

Birgi replied as follows:

1) Turkey supports freedom of navigation; this was expressed in a general manner in the joint announcement issued by the quadripartite conference in Ankara.[2] Nasser obviously cannot be trusted and Israel's demand for assurances is certainly justified.
2) Gaza should not be returned to Egypt and the current situation should be used to resolve other issues there alongside the withdrawal.
3) Turkey supports these points and seeks a way to express this support without compromising its own status in the Arab world, particularly among the member states of the Baghdad Pact.
4) Its stand in the U.N. will be determined by the course of discussion and by the position of the powers, and first and foremost of the United States.

Notes

1. No. 344.
2. See no. 337, note 3.

355. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to A. Eban. 27 January 1957

Orig.: 93.03/3064/5

Notes

1. No. 346.
2. No. 332.
3. See no. 277, note 5.
4. See Editorial Note no. 351.

356. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 27 January 1957

Uncoded Circular Tel. 763; Outg.: 130.02/2459/10

Summary

The spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[1] said that Hammarskjöld's report[2] is no less notable for ignoring well-known facts than for the legal rules that it seeks to establish.[3]

1) A fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter states that "all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." Nevertheless, the secretary-general does not condemn or even allude to the fact that Egypt has for eight years openly violated this principle by claiming to be in a state of war with Israel.
2) Hammarskjöld's sole reaction to these unprecedented acts of belligerency is to reiterate the demand that the armistice agreement be reinstated, meaning reverting to the same situation which created the crisis.
3) It was Egyptian aggression which rendered the armistice agreement meaningless and Egypt leaves no doubt about its intention to reimpose the blockade and to renew the Fedaiyun operations, as well as other acts of belligerency. There is no indication that the secretary-general took this situation into consideration or whether he clarified with the Egyptian government if it is willing to put an end to the state of war and make peace.
4) The secretary-general, for the first time, seeks to provide a basis to the Egyptian claim to belligerent party status and to its right to maintain a state of blockade. In relation to the Gulf of Aqaba, his opinion is contradictory even to an official Egyptian directive from 28 January 1950, which recognises the Gulf as an international waterway.[4]
5) Hammarskjöld mentions the Security Council resolution of 1 September 1951 on the illegality of the blockade imposed by Egypt on Israeli navigation through the Suez Canal and seeks to undermine its validity.
6) With regard to the Gaza Strip, the secretary-general proposes, in fact, that Egypt regain its sovereignty over it, instead of creating a situation which would ensure maintenance of the existing tranquillity.
7) The secretary-general has no answers to the following problems: will Egypt be ordered to cease its acts of belligerency? Will the freedom of navigation prevailing now in the Gulf of Aqaba be maintained or will Egypt be allowed to reimpose a blockade? Will peace and quiet continue to prevail in the Gaza Strip or will the tension and violence return?

The report's overall tone and implication are negative and unconstructive. Hammarskjöld contents himself with an attempt to reinstate a regime which had led to disaster in the past.

The spokesman pointed out that the Egyptian minister of foreign affairs warmly welcomed the report.

Notes

1. The statement of the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was published on 27 January.
2. See Editorial Note no. 351.
3. Eban, too, in his speech at the Assembly meeting on 28 January, severely criticised the report and stressed its bias and its weak points. See also Editorial Note no. 351.
4. See no. 286, note 2.

357. J. Tsur (Paris) to L. Eshkol and M. Bartur. 27 January 1957

Coded Tel. 552; Inc.: 130.09/2347/4

Summary

Tsur reports on his conversation with Ramadier, with Peres and Nachmias participating, on French assistance to Israel in view of the reduction of American assistance and the threat of sanctions. They reviewed the situation and presented Israel's request for a loan of 30 million dollars.

Ramadier's response was the following:

1) He sympathises with Israel's situation and is willing to help, but France's options are very limited.
2) France's financial situation is grave, owing to the oil crisis and the Algerian War (of Independence). It suffers from a severe shortage of currency and is seeking a source that would enable it to cover a deficit of hundreds of millions of dollars. Therefore a loan in dollars is out of the question.[1]
3) In addition it would be impossible to receive French assistance within the framework of the EPU (European Payments Union)[2] since they too are in deficit.
4) The French are ready to make every effort to provide merchandise found in France or within the French Monetary Union. There are, however, severe limitations to this, too.
5) He would be very glad to see Eshkol in Paris but believes that a meeting would not prove useful without a prior inquiry into Israel's requirements and the possibilities for supply. He proposes that the Israelis send the embassy

immediately a list of commodities manufactured in France and its possessions that Israel needs, and he will order the required inquiries so that he will be ready for a talk with Eshkol.

Notes

1. At the conclusion of the negotiations that Peres held in Paris, the following was agreed: 1) 14 million dollars of Israel's debt to France, which totalled 28 million dollars, will be cancelled; Israel will immediately start paying off seven million dollars from the remainder of the debt and the remaining seven million would be paid within five years; 2) France will give Israel financial aid in the amount of 30 million dollars in foodstuffs and raw materials; 3) Fifty Israeli pilots will train in France (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 8 February 1957). See also no. 395.
2. The European Payments Union was founded in 1950 in the framework of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation and served as a clearing bank for settling balances between the member states.

358. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of Foreign Affairs. 28 January 1957

Coded Tel. 566; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on his meeting with Joxe:
1) Joxe gave an account of his difficult conversation with Hammarskjöld. The secretary-general chastised him for France's support for Israel which "is encumbering his international action." Joxe replied forcefully that the purpose was not just to help Israel, but France's determination to resolve the issues threatening peace, of which the chief ones are freedom of navigation through Suez and in the Gulf. He pointed to the Egyptians' declarations on this subject, embarrassing the secretary-general.
2) Joxe found a more friendly atmosphere than he had expected in Washington at all echelons of the State Department handling Europe, but great enmity on the part of Rountree. He found sympathy for Israel's demands on the issues of Gaza and the Gulf, as well as on broadening the scope of UNEF's authority, but not for control over the administration in Gaza. He believes that the Democrats' pressure is strong and is exerting a positive influence.
3) The French ambassador to Teheran reports that the Iranians informed him that they are ready to supply oil to the port of Eilat, on condition that it is not carried in Israeli tankers, but in French, British and other tankers.

359. F. E. Shinnar (Cologne) to W. Eytan. 28 January 1957

Orig.: 130.06/1947/15

Summary

Shinnar reports on his conversation with West German Foreign Minister von Brentano. His positive approach and his sympathy for Israel's position were apparent. Among other things, he said that he understands perfectly why Israel would no longer put its trust in promises, after not being guaranteed freedom of navigation through Suez and in the Gulf of Aqaba, nor even in guarantees, which it has the absolute right to demand.

He pledged to pass on the arguments he had heard to Adenauer, with whom he was to meet the next day, and to see to it that their U.N. representative was involved in these matters.

Von Brentano was pessimistic about the near future, but, on the other hand, he is convinced that whatever Israel was forced to do by way of self-defence has brought it closer to a solution than anything else.

At the end of the conversation, the issue of the oil pipeline was raised. Shinnar hinted that Israel views it as a subject of cooperation between countries interested in an additional source for oil transport that would not be dependent on the Arabs, either for territory or as a source of oil, and stressed that Israel is willing to invest it with an international character. Von Brentano took much interest in this plan and intimated that quite possibly West Germany will look into the matter in due time.

Notes

1. The two letters, which are mostly formal, are in file 93.43/304/4.
2. See Shinnar to Eytan, Tel. 546, 25 January 1957, 93.43/2354/4.
3. See Vol. 11, no. 247.

360. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 30 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA420; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Eban informs Herzog that Pearson has proposed the following principles for a resolution by the Assembly.

1) Expressing dismay over the fact that withdrawal has not been completed and a renewed demand that it be completed without delay;
2) Mentioning the secretary-general's report with appreciation. A recommendation by the Assembly that immediately after the withdrawal steps will be taken to advance peace in the region;
3) Calling on Israel and Egypt to comply in full with all articles of the armistice agreement and to refrain from any hostilities, including any demand for belligerency rights;
4) An instruction to the secretary-general to reach an understanding with Israel and with Egypt on arrangements for deploying a U.N. force on both sides of the armistice demarcation line and in the Gaza Strip, so that UNEF can take over the duties and supervision tasks of UNTSO and prevent infiltration and raids. Egypt and Israel will be asked not to send their armies into the areas where UNEF will be stationed;
5) The U.N. will be a party to the steps taken to replace the current civilian administration in the Gaza Strip and to ensure that the Strip will not serve as a base from which to stage raids or as a target for retaliatory operations;
6) The legal status of the Gulf of Aqaba must be examined but meanwhile both sides will be asked to undertake not to demand or practise any belligerent rights there;
7) The secretary-general will be authorised to station U.N. land and air forces as soon as the area is vacated by Israel, making the necessary arrangements with Egypt. These units will act to ensure quiet in the Gulf.

Israel is avoiding committing itself to any action should the above resolution be adopted, but is making efforts to influence the final draft via friends and contacts with the sponsors of the proposals.

Note

1. In his reply to this telegram Herzog wrote on behalf of the prime minister that Pearson and other formulators of friendly resolutions should be told the whole truth, that is, that their friendship is valued but they are not well informed about the situation or aware of what Israel has endured over the past few years; be the decision as it may, Israel will act in accordance with its need for survival. The prime minister stressed that a U.N. force would not enter Gaza, nor would the IDF evacuate Sharm el-Sheikh, unless Israel received an assurance whose effectiveness is irrefutable; that Israel would not agree on any terms to deploy the U.N. force on its territory and that the situation is the outcome of Egypt's conduct. Ben-Gurion thus appeals to Pearson's conscience and requests that he not attempt to resolve the issue with ambiguous and harmful formulations. According to Ben-Gurion, the secretary-general has not, to this day, seen fit to report to the General Assembly that Egypt had violated the resolution of 1951 on the issue of navigation in the Suez Canal, and so the U.N. has not taken any steps against it. Similarly, Israel assumes that he will not take any action against India on the issue of Kashmir. The prime minister wonders whether the U.N. is intent on acting against

Israel alone, but no matter how it decides to proceed, Israel will not withdraw from its just position.

Ben-Gurion maintains that the only way to influence Pearson is by telling him the truth (see Herzog to Eban, 368, 31 January 1957, 130.02/2459/2). See also *DCER 1956–1957*, Vol. 22 no. 244, pp. 399–400, no. 245, pp. 400–402.

361. M. Alon (Ankara) to the West European Division and the Asian and African Division. 30 January 1957

Orig.: 130.15/3747/28

Summary

Alon reports on his conversation with Jamshed Gharib,[1] the Iranian minister to Turkey, following a note he had sent him according to the directives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[2] Gharib conveyed a memorandum to the Iranian foreign minister, Ardalan, who expressed his understanding of the problems and his willingness to give Israel support in principle, in particular regarding freedom of navigation, both in the Gulf of Aqaba and through the Suez Canal, if the wording of the resolution is general and Israel is not mentioned expressly. In current conditions, when efforts are being made to strengthen the Baghdad Pact and establish parallel blocs in order to isolate Egypt, Iran does not intend to make a move which might incur the wrath of the Arabs or enrage the clerics and zealots in Iran itself.

Alon described the developments in detail, emphasising the threats inherent in excessive regard for public opinion and disregard for self interest. He stressed that submission, for example on the issue of freedom of navigation, poses a threat to the free world. Helping to ensure this principle would be in Iran's interest no less than that of the rest of the countries of the region.

Notes

1. The Iranian minister to Turkey.
2. See no. 337, note 3.
3. The telegram has not been found.

362. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 31 January 1957

Coded Circ. Tel. 773; 130.02/2459/2

Summary

1) The situation [....][1]
2) Action to be taken:

Eytan instructs the Israeli delegates to approach the ministries of foreign affairs in their respective countries again and to reiterate Israel's position on the Gulf, Gaza and the armistice agreement. The window of opportunity that has opened must be used for reaching a new agreement on non-belligerency. Reverting to the armistice agreement means reverting to the previous state of blockade and war.

They should explain that there are no grounds for requesting deployment of a U.N. force on the Israeli side of the armistice demarcation line as well. While Sinai is an uninhabited desert, Israel is a small country and the presence of a foreign force anywhere would be conspicuous and cause friction.

They should seek support for Israel's positions and, in particular, that freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal be mentioned in any resolution, as it is unthinkable for the U.N. to ignore the 1951 resolution which Egypt is violating, the more so as the 2 November resolution expressly mentions freedom of navigation through the Canal.

In addition, it should be requested that their U.N. representatives mention freedom of navigation in the Gulf in their speeches and back the views of Lodge and Pearson against belligerent rights in the Gulf. With regard to Gaza, they should be asked to promise at the very least that no resolution will be adopted which rejects a continued Israeli administration with agreed relations with the U.N.

If the argument is made that there is no sense in the opposition of small countries to the position of the United States or the secretary-general, they should argued that in matters of international ethics, every country has an equal right to express its opinion.

Note

1. The first part of this telegram, which includes the main points of Pearson's proposal, has not been printed here since the issues are discussed in detail in Eban's report on his talk with Pearson. See no. 360.

363. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 31 January 1957

Coded Tel. XA 434; Outg.: 90.01/2185/9

Summary

Eban reports that the Pearson plan is collapsing due to Egypt's refusal to accept the necessary obligations and the U.S. claim that in the face of a Soviet-Arab front, it is impossible to enlist two-thirds of the General Assembly to adopt a resolution which the Arabs would vehemently oppose. There is an increasing tendency to adopt one resolution that expresses regret over the failure of Israel to complete the withdrawal of its forces and a brief additional resolution which will empower Hammarskjöld to attempt to resolve the issues by arrangements for deploying the U.N. force in Sharm el-Sheikh and along the armistice demarcation line, including Gaza, without specifying the secretary-general's or UNEF's powers and without determining the principles of the deployment.

In talks with the representatives of the United States, Britain, France, Norway, the Netherlands and New Zealand, Eban stressed that Israel is far from evacuating and that the proposal to renew Hammarskjöld's efforts would not cause a single Israeli soldier to budge.

He believes that Israel faces a protracted campaign and that it would have to face numerous discussions with the Assembly and the secretary-general until any practical solution takes shape.

364. A. Eshel (Jerusalem) to S. Avigur. 31 January 1957

Copy: 130.23/3101/25

Summary

Eshel reports that during his visit to Hungary, the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs once again raised the issue of giving them credit in the form of Israeli merchandise to the amount of approximately 500,000 dollars. The present trade agreement with Hungary[1] cannot be carried out on their part owing to the severe economic crisis the country is experiencing.

The Hungarian trade attaché to Israel has approached the Israeli government, and the Hungarian government has approached the legation in Budapest with a request for economic aid from Israel so that they could overcome their economic

difficulties. They request supply of Israeli merchandise in the above amount and undertake to return the value after one year, either in goods or in currency.

Eshel holds that granting such credit in Israeli merchandise would be regarded as a gesture and contribute to the continued emigration of Jews from Hungary. At one time, it was hinted that Hungary was willing to enable 10,000 Jews to emigrate in exchange for a large sum, and Israel was willing to consider this. Israel should take the financial risk, which undoubtedly exists, and grant the Hungarians the requested credit. If the Hungarians' attitude towards emigration changes for the worse, supply of merchandise could be halted.

Due to Israel's dire economic situation, Bartur dares not approach the Ministry of Finance on this issue. Eshel proposes that Avigur talk with the finance minister if he too deems the issue as important as Eshel does.

Note

1. See no. 241, note 2.

365. D. Lewin (New York) to the Asian and African Division. 31 January 1957

Orig.: 130.23/3093/23

Summary

The Afro-Asian bloc

Since the publication of the secretary-general's report, the bloc members had met several times, with only one of those meetings dedicated to Israel's withdrawal, and had not reached a commonly accepted draft resolution. The Syrians, on behalf of the Arabs, pushed for formulating a harsh draft resolution, but the friends of Israel — a group which now included Turkey and Iran, and even, for its own reasons, India — were opposed.

Naturally, not only sympathy towards Israel or Lewin's connections influenced the course of events inside the bloc, but also the Americans and the Canadians, who are striving to formulate a moderate Western resolution[1] which could possibly win two-thirds of the votes at the General Assembly.

Note

1. See no. 360.

366. Editorial Note

Resumption of the General Assembly Session and Adoption of Two Resolutions on Withdrawal (1–2 February 1957)

The U.N. General Assembly resumed its discussions on the situation in the Middle East and on the secretary-general's report (see Editorial Note no. 351). Two draft resolutions were tabled which were submitted by the United States, India, Brazil, Colombia, Yugoslavia, Norway, and Indonesia. The first called upon Israel to complete the withdrawal and return its forces immediately and without delay behind the Israel-Egypt armistice demarcation lines (the Assembly's sixth resolution on this subject). The second asserted that, following the withdrawal, action should be taken to ensure progress towards achieving peaceful conditions between Israel and Egypt, and called upon them to adhere strictly to the armistice agreement. The U.N. secretary-general was asked to carry out the measures he had proposed in his report, including deploying the U.N. force along the armistice demarcation lines in the Gaza Strip and along the Gulf of Aqaba.

In the second draft resolution, among whose initiators was the United States, the roles of the U.N. force were not clearly defined, the resolution's implementation was assigned to Hammarskjöld and its phrasing was indefinite and not binding. The United States had thus acquiesced to the Afro-Asian bloc's pressure and rendered the draft resolution inadmissible as far as Israel was concerned. In response, Lester Pearson withdrew from his initiative to submit to the General Assembly a unified Western draft resolution on this issue (see nos. 362, 363). Nevertheless, despite its shortcomings, Israel saw the resolution as an important indication of the progress made towards international recognition that General Assembly resolutions on evacuation of forces were futile without addressing and rectifying the belligerent conditions that had predated the outbreak of war (see *The Political Battle*, pp. 169–173).

The first resolution was adopted by a large majority of 74 votes in favour, with two states against — Israel and France, and two abstaining — Luxembourg and Holland. The second resolution was also adopted by a majority of 56 votes in favour, with none against, but with 22 states abstaining, including Israel. In a telegram to the Israel missions abroad, Eytan specified the arguments for Israel's abstention:

1) Approaches from France, Holland, Italy, and several Latin American states, as well as an entreaty by Pearson (see no. 370); 2) Israel did not want Egypt to appear moderate compared with her intransigence; 3) the resolution spoke of peace and Israel's opposition could have been misconstrued; 4) the resolution was vague and left room for elucidations (see Coded Circ. Tel. 784, 3 February 1957, 130.16/2959/16).

Another proposal proposed by the Soviet Union at the last moment called for voting on the first draft resolution only and setting a date for evacuating Israel's forces — 5 February. This proposal was rejected by a majority of 52 votes, with the eight member states of the Eastern bloc in favour and nine Arab countries abstaining.

The first draft's formulation was harsher than that of the five preceding resolutions concerning Israel's withdrawal, as a result of King Saud's intervention with Eisenhower (see Editorial Note no. 376). Looming in the background was the shadow of the next step which might be taken against Israel — a call for imposing sanctions on a state which refused to comply with resolutions adopted by a large majority at the U.N. General Assembly. As expected, both Eisenhower and Dulles raised the issue of sanctions the very next day (see no. 371).

The wording of the Assembly resolutions was as follows:

GAOR Resolution 1124 (XI) 2.2.1957

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 997 (ES–I) of 2 November 1956, 998 (ES–I) and 999 (ES–I) of 4 November 1956, 1002 (ES–I) of 7 November 1956, 1120 (XI) of 24 November 1956 and 1123 (XI) of 19 January 1957,

1. *Deplores* the non-compliance of Israel to complete its withdrawal behind the armistice demarcation line despite the repeated requests of the General Assembly;
2. *Calls upon* Israel to complete its withdrawal behind the armistice demarcation line without further delay.

GAOR Resolution 1125 (XI) 2.2.1957

The General Assembly,

Having received the report of the Secretary-General of 24 January 1957,

Recognizing that withdrawal by Israel must be followed by action which would assure progress towards the creation of peaceful conditions,

1. *Notes with appreciation* the Secretary-General's report and the measures therein to be carried out upon Israel's complete withdrawal;
2. *Calls upon* the Governments of Egypt and Israel scrupulously to observe the provisions of the General Armistice Agreement between Egypt and Israel of 24 February 1949;
3. *Considers* that, after full withdrawal of Israel from the Sharm el-Sheikh and Gaza areas, the scrupulous maintenance of the armistice agreement requires the placing of the United Nations Emergency Force on the Egyptian-Israel armistice demarcation line and the implementation of other measures as proposed in the

Secretary-General's report, with due regard to the considerations set out therein with a view to assist in achieving situations conducive to the maintenance of peaceful conditions in the area;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the parties concerned, to take steps to carry out these measures and to report, as appropriate, to the General Assembly.

367. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 1 February 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA 286; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Eban gives Herzog his comments on the two draft resolutions in the General Assembly.

Trends

1) In view of the stagnation prevailing at the General Assembly, the United States is interested in removing the issue from there for a while in order to plan its moves and give Hammarskjöld another opportunity to reach a solution.
2) As soon as the United States had explained to the Asians and other states that a solution cannot be forced by sanctions, it became clear that the solution would be attained only by means of deliberations and negotiations.
3) Public opinion at the U.N. and worldwide is steadfast in its support of preventoing reimposition of the blockade, and several of the sponsors hope that this issue, at least, would be resolved as a result of further talks held by Hammarskjöld. On the issue of Gaza, Israel's argument is still unacceptable.

Prospects

1) For the first time, the General Assembly's policy is expressed not only in a call for withdrawal, but also in a call for consultations to determine what will follow the withdrawal and to ensure the maintenance of peaceful conditions in the region.
2) A prospect has opened for negotiations in which Israel could use one resolution against the other and make withdrawal conditional on advance information about the action to ensure the "peaceful conditions."
3) Article 2 of the resolution necessitates Hammarskjöld's application to Nasser to obtain a commitment on refraining from acts of belligerency, including the blockade of Suez, as a prior condition for making demands from Israel.
4) A few representatives are already wondering what Egypt will do if it becomes persuaded that there is no possibility of coercing Israel into a withdrawal and it must substantially alter some of its policies. The U.S. hesitation over taking

coercive measures against Israel is of major importance here, and is largely influenced by public opinion.

5) Prospects for negotiations are numerous, without overlooking the resolution's fundamental flaws: adherence to the armistice regime and restriction of the secretary-general's consultations to the measures proposed in his report.
6) It can be assumed that even following the secretary-general's consultations with the parties, the two issues of Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh will be left unresolved. It is therefore important to hold negotiations that would enlist public sympathy.

Action

1) All of Israel's friends in Europe and in America at the General Assembly should be enlisted to help. Pivotal importance is attributed to Lodge's statements and it is to be hoped that on the Gulf issue, at least, his statements will reinforce Israel's position.
2) Naturally, Israel will vote against the resolution on non-completion of the withdrawal. The minister of foreign affairs has not made a final decision on details of the vote on the second resolution.

The arguments for abstention

1) A vote against would be construed as a refusal to hold consultations and, clearly, Israel will not refuse this in practice.
2) There is substantial American and Latin pressure not to vote against the resolution, which, according to them, will ultimately lead to the elimination of the blockade in the Gulf.
3) It is safe to assume that Egypt will not vote against, inasmuch as its abstention is the price it had to pay in exchange for the withdrawal resolution; a vote against by Israel would put Egypt in the position of the moderate party, while Israel would be seen in a negative light, as fearing further negotiations.
4) The second article in the preamble to the second resolution gives Israel a concrete foundation to make its withdrawal conditional on knowledge in advance of the action to be taken to ensure a state of peace.

Note

1. No. 79.

368. S. Arad (Washington) to A. Eban (New York). 1 February 1957

Coded Tel. 049; Outg.: 93.08/409/3

Summary

Arad summarises a conversation with Bergus on the Eisenhower Doctrine. Bergus is concerned that the plan has not been properly understood. In response to Arad's claim that Israel has not been informed of its contents, Bergus said that Dulles decided that as long as the plan has not been approved in Congress, there would be no further details. Even after Congress approves the plan, it will be Richards' task to hold talks on this subject. It is clear to Bergus that the United States will insist on **full identification** with the plan, but the form that this identification will take remains undetermined.

Richards will arrive in the region, conduct a survey on the needs of different countries according to the Doctrine's principles, and obtain statements of identification with the plan from all of the countries, **including Israel**, but not Egypt or Syria. Nasser will face a tough choice: it will be clear both to him and to the Soviets that the United States will view actual Soviet penetration as intolerable.

Notes

1. No. 273.
2. See Editorial Note no. 376.
3. The first resolution adopted at the U.N. General Assembly on the withdrawal issue on 2 November 1956, see Editorial Note no. 11.

369. S. Kaddar (Prague) to the East European Division. 1 February 1957

Coded Tel. 994; Inc.: 130.09/2343/7

Summary

Kaddar reports on a conversation he held with Šimovič[1] on relations between Israel and Czechoslovakia.

Kaddar complained about the lack of contacts between himself and the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, exactly at the time when their government had determined almost conclusively its stance towards Israel. He mentioned the horror

propaganda in the press and the lies published about Israel. Šimovič claimed that they have all the information and doubted whether new facts could be uncovered in a talk with Kaddar.

Later in the conversation, the issue of family reunification was discussed. In spite of the fact that emigration has recently ground to a total halt, Šimovič claimed that their position has remained unchanged; they are continuing to consider every request individually and to decide according to circumstances. Kaddar was of the impression that they will make some move to renew family reunification, if only on a small scale.

In conclusion, Šimovič noted that their decision to send a minister to Israel[3] still stands, but that this has not been carried out to date due to the lack of an appropriate candidate and owing to the inauguration of many missions of late. He hopes that the right person will soon be found.

Notes

1. Ladislav Šimovič, Czech deputy minister of foreign affairs.
2. No details have been found in relation to this affair.
3. An almost identical conversation on the issues of emigration and the appointment of a minister to Israel took place approximately one month later between Kaddar and Zachistal, director of the Asian Division in the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see Kaddar to the East European division, Tel. 3, 11 March 1957, 130.23/3120/4). Israel had decided to raise the level of its representation in Prague, and already in July 1956 Kaddar was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary.

370. G. Meir (New York) to the Prime Minister. 2 February 1957

Coded Tel. XA446; Inc.: 130.09/2333/11

Summary

Meir reports on an additional approach by Pearson, who requested that Israel abstain in the vote on the second resolution at the General Assembly and expressed his concern that otherwise it would hamper his efforts to enlist support for Israel. Of late he had accomplished much, and despite Dulles' pressure he had refused to join the supporters of the weakened resolution.[1] Similar requests came from France, Holland, Italy, and several Latin American states. The mission agrees unanimously that Israel should oppose the first resolution and abstain on the second, while clearly expressing its reservations.

Abstention could be used to influence the speeches of others, including Pearson, who are prepared to give the resolution a positive interpretation in preparation for a future conflict with Hammarskjöld and further discussions at the General Assembly.

Note

1. See Editorial Note no. 366.

371. Message from President Eisenhower (Washington) to Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion. 3 February 1957

Copy: 93.08/407/18

Notes

1. No. 70.
2. No. 79.
3. See Editorial Note no. 366.
4. See Editorial Note no. 351.
5. The threat of imposing sanctions on Israel if it did not comply with the U.N. resolutions also came up at the press conference which Dulles held on 5 February. When asked if the United States would support imposing sanctions on Israel should the latter disobey the U.N.'s demand for immediate withdrawal, Dulles replied that the United States would not use unilateral sanctions against Israel, but would give it serious thought if the U.N. called for this measure in order to enforce its resolutions on the withdrawal issue (see *The Political Battle*, p. 178).

372. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 4 February 1957

Uncoded Circ. Tel. 785; Outg.: 130.09/2377/5

Summary

In response to the resolutions adopted at the U.N. General Assembly,[1] the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Israel would take part in any U.N. endeavour whose purpose is to establish peace in the region, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter. Israel expresses its satisfaction over the increasing realisation at the U.N. that reverting to the previous state of violence and blockade

on the part of Egypt is unacceptable. Still Israel regrets that the General Assembly has not grasped in full the sources of tension stemming from the fact that Egypt continues to maintain a state of belligerency against Israel, which is in clear violation of the Charter and the Security Council resolutions. It is not possible for the U.N. to overlook Egypt's violation of Security Council resolutions and its international commitments, by imposing a blockade in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba, while on the other hand, calling on Israel to withdraw from the west coast of the Gulf without providing it with satisfactory assurances that freedom of navigation would not be violated once more by Egypt.

Israel is unwavering in its position on the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip which was determined in the Knesset on 23 January.[2] The solution of these two problems, which involves cessation of Egyptian acts of belligerency on land and sea, is a prerequisite for peace in the Middle East and is vital to Israel's existence.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 366.
2. See Editorial Note no. 338. At a government meeting on 3 February a political discussion was held following the resolutions adopted in the U.N. General Assembly. No new decisions were taken, and the government reaffirmed its previous decisions to hold onto the Gaza Strip and the west coast of the Gulf of Aqaba pending the guarantee of freedom of navigation by means of concrete assurances. Ben-Gurion was absent from the meeting due to illness and Minister of Finance Eshkol conducted it. The decision was brought to Ben-Gurion's home for his approval (see stenographic record of the government meeting, 3 February 1957, in file 77.0/9/33).

373. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 4 February 1957

Coded Tel. XA457; Outg.: 93.01/2186/10

Summary

Kidron summarises Eban's talk with the secretary-general on 4 February, with Rafael, Kidron, Bunche, Cordier, and Martola also participating.[1]

The secretary-general indicated the significance of the stage they had reached and the great importance they should attach to the next stages. In its second resolution,[2] the General Assembly had assigned him a heavy responsibility without proper guidance. He has to maintain close contact with the General Assembly and plans to involve the Advisory Committee[3] in the entire course of discussions.

Eban pointed out that the nature of the second resolution may cause problems that would be solvable only at the highest governmental level and inquired as to whether the secretary-general would be willing to travel to the region to handle these problems. Hammarskjöld replied positively, but pointed out that he would

not wish to go until the first resolution, which the General Assembly had adopted unconditionally, had been implemented.[4] Eban emphasised the connections between the two resolutions, but the secretary-general was adamant.

Following the procedural discussion, Eban read out an aide mémoire.[5] The secretary-general said that he would be able to respond to its contents only following a discussion at the Advisory Committee; however, he stated that the entire General Assembly, including Pearson, acknowledged the need for Egyptian consent for stationing UNEF on the west coast of the Gulf of Aqaba. He asked whether the evacuation of Israel's forces is contingent on it. On Gaza, he asserted that evacuation entails not only the withdrawal of military forces, but of the civil administration as well. Therefore he must inquire whether Israel's plan also includes this withdrawal and the entry of UNEF, and whether Israel objects on principle and in all circumstances to the stationing of UNEF in Nitzana.

Eban replied that Israel's position on these issues was given in its aide mémoire of 23 November[7] and in its statements; nevertheless, he is ready to request a clarification from the government. The secretary-general replied that if Israel insists on the exact phrasing of the aide mémoire and the statements, it would leave little room for discussion. The Egyptians have already requested the resumption of the Assembly discussions, and this could be prevented only by constructive progress.

Bunche wished to know whether on the issue of abstention from belligerency Israel would make do with reaffirmation of the armistice agreement by Egypt. Eban replied in the absolute negative, pointing out that for eight years the Egyptians had attempted to claim for themselves a right to belligerency within the framework of the agreement.

Eban later conversed in private with the secretary-general.[8]

Appendix: Aide Mémoire

The Government of Israel takes note of the adoption by the General Assembly of two inter-related Resolutions (A/3571 (I) and A/3518 (II)).[9]

Israel will cooperate with any United Nations effort designed to establish peace in the area, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter.

I am instructed urgently to request the secretary-general to ask the Government of Egypt whether Egypt agrees to the mutual and full abstention from belligerent acts, by land, air and sea, on the withdrawal of Israel troops. This matter is of central importance to all the questions at issue.

In considering the withdrawal schedule, I am instructed to refer to the Sharm el-Sheikh area and the related question of measures designed to prevent hostile acts, such as interference with free navigation in the Straits of Tiran and in the Gulf of Aqaba. The General Assembly in its Resolution II has recognised "that withdrawal by Israel must be followed by action which would assure progress towards the creation of peaceful conditions."

A renewal of interference with shipping bound to and from Eilat would clearly lead to hostilities and thus prejudice the declared objective of United Nations resolutions. Accordingly, I am instructed to obtain clarification without delay, whether immediately on the withdrawal of Israel forces from the Sharm el-Sheikh area, units of the United Nations Emergency Force will be stationed along the western shore of the Gulf of Aqaba in order to act as a restraint against hostile acts; and will remain so deployed until another effective means is agreed upon between the parties concerned for ensuring permanent freedom of navigation and the absence of belligerent acts in the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba.

A positive response to the above questions from all concerned would greatly facilitate the early fulfilment of United Nations objectives as set forth in the United Nations resolutions taken as a whole.

Notes

1. The minutes are in file 130.02/2448/7 but have not been printed here.
2. See Editorial Note no. 366.
3. See no. 73, note 2.
4. See Editorial Note no. 366
5. See Appendix. The reasons for submitting this aide mémoire to Hammarskjöld were, according to Eban, as follows: "Our line of reasoning was aimed at obtaining evidence that Egypt was frustrating the United Nations' efforts. From the negotiations themselves with the secretary-general we hoped to amass material for the campaign, and we therefore decided to correspond with him in writing" (see *The Political Battle*, p. 176).
6. In a discussion at the General Assembly prior to adoption of the resolutions the Egyptian representative, Fawzi, stated his government's position as follows:
   1) Israel must withdraw immediately behind the armistice demarcation lines; 2) following Israel's withdrawal, UNEF will take over posts on both sides of the armistice demarcation line; 3) UNEF's entry and deployment require the approval of the Egyptian government. UNEF has no bearing on the resolution of any issues, its sole role being to carry out the U.N.'s wish to end the aggression against Egypt and ensure Israel's withdrawal behind the armistice demarcation lines (see *ibid.*, p. 171).
7. The aide mémoire was submitted on 21 November, see no. 129, appendix.
8. See no. 379.
9. See Editorial Note no. 366.

374. Z. Doriel[1] (Teheran) to I. Kosloff. 4 February 1957

Copy: 130.15/3748/8

Summary

Doriel expresses his vigorous opposition to the purchase of oil from Iran through a French company. He is of the opinion that the plan would only sabotage Israel-Iran relations. He proposes to maintain Israel's freedom of purchase and commitment, which he views as an important commercial and political instrument. The key issue, in his opinion, is not the purchase of oil, but its transport in the Straits and the Gulf of Aqaba, and to that end, Iran's consent should be obtained.

Notes

1. Zvi Doriel, head of the Israeli mission in Teheran from May 1956.
2. Iran was supposed to supply the oil for the Eilat-Haifa pipeline, since in November 1955 it had sent through its embassy in London a proposal to supply Israel with an amount of oil greater than Israel's overall consumption via the National Iranian Oil Company. However, making Iran Israel's primary oil supplier was risky and entailed numerous problems, both political — the Arab countries' likely response — and practical — the lack of tankers for transporting the oil from Iran to Eilat. In addition, Israel did not wish to clash with the Consortium (the union of Western oil companies producing oil in Iran). In order to avoid exposing its oil source, the Israeli government decided in 1956 to purchase part of the Iranian oil indirectly, through a French company, Petrofrance, that also took upon itself to transport it to Eilat.
3. The telegram has not been found. Doriel vehemently opposed the semi-fictitious transaction with the French company and argued in two letters to Kosloff (of 30 January and of 4 February 1957) that the purchase should be made directly from the National Iranian Oil Company, and in addition small quantities should be purchased from the Consortium, primarily to make Israel's activity apparent to it. The two letters are cited in Uri Bialer's article: "Oil from Iran—Zvi Doriel's Mission in Tehran 1956–1963," *Iyunim* [Hebrew], 9 (1996), pp. 129–166; however, the ISA file numbers given in the article are erroneous.

   In early March it was decided to postpone the signing of the contract with the French company, due to pressure from Doriel and Kosloff, and to wait for the arrival of the first shipments to Eilat (see Bartur to Galli, 5 March 1957, 93.02/2051/4).
4. Kosloff served in the capacity of fuel adviser to the Ministry of Finance and director of petroleum affairs at the Ministry of Development.
5. See Doriel to Eshkol, 7 January 1957, 130.15/3748/8.
6. See note 3 above.

375. M. Tov (New York) to the Latin American Division. 4 February 1957

Coded Tel. XA452; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Tov reports on Lodge's meeting with the Latin bloc member states before the vote in the General Assembly on 2 February. Lodge expounded on the purpose of the two resolutions[1] and requested them not to take a strong stand on Israel's withdrawal, but rather to understand that it should be integrated with arrangements to ensure security. He explained that the two resolutions are interconnected and the Russians cannot be allowed to separate them.

Some of the participants refused to back the resolutions, even after Tov had also spoken with them[2]; the others requested either to wait for directives from their governments or to modify the formulation of the resolutions.

Before the vote was taken, several of the Latin bloc delegates asked Israel not to vote against, since accepting the principle of a connection between the two resolutions constitutes a victory for it.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 366.
2. See a telegram from Tov to Shaltiel (BMA251, 31 January 1957, in file 93.01/2185/9), in which he reports on his talks at the General Assembly with delegates from Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, El Salvador, Cuba, and Costa Rica.

376. Editorial Note

King Saud's Visit to the United States and its Implications (29 January–8 February 1957)

At the quadripartite meeting which took place on 19 January in Cairo, it was decided that King Saud would leave for the United States and explain the views of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan on the Eisenhower Doctrine, the issue of navigation through the Suez Canal and relations with Israel.

King Saud's visit, which was defined as a state visit, commenced on 29 January in New York, where he met with the U.N. secretary-general and also spoke before the U.N. General Assembly (Israel boycotted the ceremonies held in his honour). The following day, President Eisenhower greeted him at the airport in Washington

D.C., as a special gesture. At that time the president's doctrine for the Middle East was at the centre of discussion in Congress, and the king's support for it could tip the balance in favour of its adoption and ratification. During his stay in Washington, King Saud held a series of meetings with Eisenhower, with Dulles, with the senior staff at the State Department and with Congress leaders.

The Israeli representatives followed the visit with concern, fearing that Israel would be called upon to pay the price for King Saud's loyalty and support of the United States. On 28 January Lodge addressed the General Assembly and stressed the importance of deploying a U.N. force at the Straits of Tiran to ensure non-belligerency there, and that the United States could not agree to resumption of the situation that had originally caused the outbreak of hostilities. After Lodge's address, the Arab representatives to the U.N. complained to King Saud, who later brought up the issue in his discussions with Eisenhower.

In Washington there were widespread rumours that Eisenhower had made a commitment to the king to insist that Israel evacuate Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh, and that as a result Lodge had stepped up his demands from Israel. It was on this background that the president's note was sent to Ben-Gurion on 3 February (see above no. 371; see Shiloah to Eban, DNA482, 4 February 1957, 93.01/2185/10).

In a joint announcement issued in Washington on 8 February, King Saud expressed his consent to the Eisenhower Doctrine and to continued cooperation with the United States. Likewise, the U.S. right to use the air force base in Dhahran was extended by five more years. In return, the United States pledged to supply modern arms, including warplanes and tanks, to Saudi Arabia and to undertake to train the Saudi army so as to ensure internal security (see Meroz to the United States division, 5 February 1957, 130.23/3089/7; see also *The Political Battle*, pp. 168–170).

377. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 5 February 1957

Coded Tel. 294; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Following a conversation with Bunche, Eban summarises the situation which, in his opinion, has reached its most decisive point since the beginning of the General Assembly's discussions:

1) The secretary-general shows no inclination to reach a constructive solution via negotiations based on the resolutions of 2 February, but rather to bring the matter back to the Assembly, based on non-compliance on Israel's part.

2) Due to pressure applied by Saud and the difficulties encountered by the Assembly in its efforts to reach a solution, the United States is inclined to end the affair by means of pressure on Israel to withdraw in keeping with the Assembly's resolut"on. This shift in the U.S. position strengthens the secretary-general's position. At present the United States is not happy to clash with Israel, but will apparently not hesitate to do so.
3) The root of the crisis in relations with the United States and the West is not only Israel's insistence on the need for assurances before the evacuation of its forces. Aside from the matter of the Straits, the disagreement is on all the basic elements of the plan, i.e., the stationing of U.N. forces in Gaza and on either side of the border and the armistice agreement. This makes it very difficult to form some sort of united friendly front, and both the Arabs and the secretary-general know it.

   The central fact is that even Israel's supporters see the armistice agreement as the sole legal and political framework; Israel's denial of this framework precludes the formation of a common line with any bloc in Europe, the Commonwealth or Latin America.
4) In view of the stance adopted by Israel, one should not overestimate its ability to achieve better results at the Assembly than it has in previous discussions.

It is difficult to assess the Arabs' chances on the issue of sanctions. Though there are reservations both within the Assembly and in the United States, still it is by no means certain that a third of the Assembly will be willing to cast a "no" vote. What is more important is the fact that the United States has apparently undertaken somehow to achieve the evacuation of Israeli forces from all points beyond the armistice demarcation line and also to replace the civilian administration in Gaza with some other administration. In light of the above, Israel is up against a bitter struggle in the Assembly.

In Washington, after Dulles' statements about the 2 February resolutions,[3] the 1951 Security Council resolutions, and the U.S. attitude to sanctions, Senator Knowland[4] issued a strong statement decrying the U.N.'s discrimination against Israel while not imposing any sanctions on the Soviet Union. His words created a great commotion. Eban expects that following Knowland's statement, Democratic senators will also express themselves in the same vein.

Notes

1. No. 373.
2. See Editorial Note no. 366.
3. See no. 371, note 5.
4. William Knowland, leader of the Republican minority in the Senate and a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.
5. See for example no. 391, note 1.
6. No. 371.

378. D. Hammarskjold to A. Eban (New York). 6 February 1957

Orig. 93.03/3064/5

Notes

1. See no. 373.
2. See no. 377.
3. See no. 373, Appendix.
4. Further to the conversation with Hammarskjöld of 4 February, Eban consulted with the government, and wrote again to Hammarskjöld the next day to emphasise that Israel attaches importance to the two questions presented in the aide mémoire submitted to him on Egypian belligerency and the function of UNEF (see no. 373, Appendix). Eban mentioned in his letter that replies to these questions could create a climate conducive to clarifying the questions posed by the secretary-general to Israel in their latest talk (see Eban to Hammarskjöld, 5 February 1957, DAG — 1/2.25.5.2:17, U.N. Archives).

379. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 6 February 1957

Coded Tel. 296; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Eban reports on his conversation with Hammarskjöld on 4 February. At the opening of the conversation the secretary-general complained of the negative attitude towards him in Israel, and wished to know the reasons for it.

Eban listed several causes:

1) His reports and actions, which are evidence of the imbalance in his attitude towards Israel and the Arabs.
2) His style in his dealings with Israel.
3) The feeling that he recruits some countries against Israel and deters others from supporting it.
4) The general climate surrounding him.
5) The fact that the Arabs embrace him enthusiastically is also highly instructive.

Hammarskjöld was quick to reject all the above. He expressed his grave concern, since he still hopes to play a part in bringing the situation to a resolution, which is impossible if the parties involved do not trust him.

Later in the conversation, Eban explained the vital importance of freedom of navigation to Israel and its refusal to accept the secretary-general's narrow legal

approach. He also stressed that talk of coercion and sanctions does not have any effect on Israel other than to make it more determined to insist on its demands.

Hammarskjöld said he is well aware of this fact. Some nations reach their height only through isolation and suffering, and this characteristic is evident in the State of Israel. The main point is for Israel to accept U.N. responsibility for Gaza and to allow it a foothold in Nitzana. It is true that UNEF has no legal status in Nitzana, but the Israeli government can create such a status by approving it, just as Egypt established UNEF's legal status in Sinai without giving up its sovereignty.

Notes

1. No. 373.
2. No. 254
3. On 20 January Hammarskjöld met with Pineau and complained to him about France's vote in the Assembly supporting Israel. Pineau answered him sharply that the French delegation was determined to give Israel all the help necessary to achieve its just demands (see Najar to Eytan, XA423, 30 January 1957, 93.01/2186/4). Hammarskjöld made similar complaints to Joxe of the French Foreign Ministry (see no. 358).

380. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 6 February 1957

Coded Tel. 69; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Kidron reports on Hammarskjöld's talk with Eban on 6 February, also attended by Bunche and himself.

At the beginning of the conversation the secretary-general announced that the session of the General Assembly scheduled for the next day had been cancelled.[1] Then he addressed Israel's press release,[2] and claimed that it provides an incomplete and even distorted picture of the situation. Therefore he himself has issued a press release.[3] As for the queries that Israel requested that he deliver to Egypt concerning belligerency and Sharm el-Sheikh, he said that he refuses to deliver them until he receives an answer from Israel to his own queries.

He claims that the questions to Egypt in fact constitute a condition for the withdrawal and a demand for answers under duress. Even if he did receive an answer from Egypt regarding belligerency, he would not pass it on, since this is no way to conduct negotiations. All attempts to explain to him that the answers to the questions would affect the answers to his questions failed, and he remained steadfast in his refusal even to deal with the aide mémoire[4] submitted to him until he receives answers. At the end of the short talk he said "I'm in despair" and gave an answer to

the letter from Israel of 5 February, in which he established the priority of stationing UNEF in Gaza and Nitzana over the issues of belligerency and the Straits.

Notes

1. The General Assembly session was cancelled at the instigation of the United States, see nos. 381, 382.
2. The press release included data on Israel's withdrawal from Sinai and on its positive response to the U.N. Assembly's resolution of 2 February. Most of it was dedicated to questions about belligerency rights and freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, questions which Israel had asked the secretary-general to pass on to the Egyptian government (see announcement made by the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations, 6 February 1957, 130.02/2459/11). The intent of the Israel mission in publishing this press release was to bring the controversy between Israel and Hammarskjöld to the attention of the various U.N. missions and public opinion in the United States.
3. The press release is in file 130.02/2448/7 but was omitted here.
4. See no. 373, Appendix.
5. See no. 378, note 4.

381. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 6 February 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA 298; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Eban reports on a talk with Barco which Rafael also attended. Barco told him that:

1) The United States objected to the secretary-general's wish to convene the General Assembly the next day and would act to cancel it. (The session was in fact cancelled.)
2) The United States had hoped for a more positive resolution than the one adopted, but for various reasons could do no more. Now it wishes to see full use of that resolution in order to resolve as many problems as possible within its framework. It would like Hammarskjöld to start serious negotiations and not simply make do with writing reports and summoning the Assembly.
3) The United States believes measures should be taken to ensure Israel's security after the evacuation, but insists on determining these measures and holding consultations about them without delay.
4) The solution for Sharm el-Sheikh is as defined by Lodge,[1] but the problem lies in finding a suitable way that will ensure its acceptance by Egypt.
5) As for the secretary-general — the United States will advise that if one of the parties needs to submit questions to the other, it is best that the secretary-general

pass on those questions and not take on himself responsibility for delaying them.

Note

1. See Editorial Note no. 376. After King Saud's intervention with President Eisenhower, Lodge supported the vaguer version of the resolution adopted at the Assembly on 2 February.

382. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 6 February 1957

Coded Tel. 297; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Eban replies to Herzog's telegram on the chances that the General Assembly will support a draft resolution to impose sanctions on Israel.[1] The postponement of the General Assembly session initiated by the United States is very important since it buys some time for strengthening opposition to the sanctions both in the United States and other countries. Knowland's[2] statement is of great importance and represents a good return on the efforts invested in him.

It is necessary to approach various governments, to bring the aide mémoire[3] to their attention and to ask whether Israel's demand for the end of belligerency and its proposal to use U.N. forces to prevent a blockade justify punitive measures of a kind not used against countries which waged wars of aggression or carried out blockades and other hostile acts.

It is difficult to assess what the voting will be. Obviously, no country will leave the decision on such a weighty matter to the discretion of its U.N. representative alone; therefore, the fate of this battle will be decided to a great extent in the capitals of those nations.

Notes

1. This telegram says: "How do you envisage the next discussion in the U.N.? A proposal to condemn [Israel], with a threat of sanctions or a proposal of sanctions? Or is there a possibility of some interim proposal aimed at enabling another attempt at a solution? In any case, please telegraph [names of] countries that, in your opinion, may act or vote against sanctions, and also in which capitals you think we should act" (see Herzog to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations, TNWA 86, 6 February 1957, 93.01/2185/10).
2. See no. 377. Knowland's statement was not the only protest by Congress over the Administration's attitude towards Israel. On 6 February, 41 Republican members of

Congress signed a document calling on the Administration to oppose any demand for an Israeli withdrawal until Egypt opened negotiations on the subjects at issue between itself and Israel. 75 Democratic members of Congress had made a similar appeal even earlier (on 23 January), demanding that the United States insist on freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal and through the Straits before it demands that Israel evacuate the territory it was holding (see *The Political Battle*, p. 180).

3. See no. 379, Appendix.

383. G. Meir (New York) to the Prime Minister. 6 February 1957

Coded Tel. 470; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

The foreign minister responds to a report circulated by the news agencies to the effect that the Israeli government has decided on compromise proposals and that new directives are being sent to its mission.[1] She requests that no announcements be made and Lawson should be told nothing without prior consultation with the mission.

Israel's current stance on non-belligerency and Sharm el-Sheikh is meeting with general understanding. General Clay,[2] too, has said that Israel's position has never been so strong and so clear. This is reflected both in the press and in talks with delegation heads. It is true that the secretary-general is attempting to pressure Israel into giving a negative answer instead of applying to Egypt, since he knows that there is no chance of receiving a positive answer from the Egyptians. However Israel will not let him get away with that.

After Dulles' speech,[3] there was concern about sanctions, but even though there is no certainty that sanctions will be not be imposed, Clay's words nonetheless had a calming effect. Meir is convinced that this is not the time to make changes in Israel's position. If only the question of Gaza remained, perhaps it would be worthwhile to make some announcement on the subject of the refugees, or to offer something more substantial about the function of the U.N., but Egypt will in any case not facilitate a satisfactory solution to the Sharm el-Sheikh issue.

Notes

1. On 6 February an extraordinary government meeting was held at the home of Ben-Gurion, who had not yet completely recovered from his illness. The ministers discussed the message sent by Eisenhower to Ben-Gurion and the prime minister's proposed reply. They also discussed Eban's report on his talk with Hammarskjöld on

4 February (no. 373), and the secretary-general's demand to receive an answer from Israel by midnight as to whether it intended to carry out the first resolution of the U.N. Assembly from 2 February on withdrawal. The excuse used by Hammarskjöld for his urgent appeal to Israel was the pressure on him by the Arab countries and others to convene the Assembly forthwith and to provide an account of the carrying out of its resolutions. (Ultimately, the session was postponed under pressure from the United States.)

Eban's report on the personal and confidential part of his talk with Hammarskjöld on 4 February (see no. 379) had not yet arrived, and Ben-Gurion and the ministers thought that they should wait for it. The government meeting ended with a ratification of the earlier decisions, without any new decision (see stenographic record of the government meeting, 6 February 1957, in file 77.0/9/33).

2. In his meeting with the foreign minister on 6 February, Clay advised that Israel stand firm in its position, and gave his opinion that the Administration, too, understood it and that ultimately no sanctions would be imposed on Israel (see Eban to Herzog, NWT 299, 6 February 1957, 130.02/2459/2).
3. See no. 371, note 5.
4. See Ben-Gurion's reply, no. 388. In Circ. Tel. 794, too, Eytan stressed: "The government is adamant in its decision to stand firm at this juncture and not give in. All rumours about shifts in its position are totally groundless" (see Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, 9 February 1957, 130.09/2377/5).

384. A. Salmon (Washington) to A. Eban (New York). 6 February 1957

Report: 130.23/3088/3

Summary

Salmon reports on a conversation with Bergus. With regard to the Eisenhower Doctrine on the Middle East, Bergus said that the assumption is that Congress will approve the doctrine by about mid-February. Richards is already preparing the material and the proposals for the 14 countries he intends to visit; the visit is to last around six weeks.

Richards will be accompanied by a high-ranking official from the State Department, a representative of the ICA (the International Cooperation Administration) (possibly Seager) and a mission coordinator — William Burdett.

They are quite sure that Egypt and Syria will not cooperate, and therefore they will probably not receive economic aid.

They are highly impressed with the letter from Jordan's King Hussein to Nabulsi (4 February 1957), but they will not grant aid to Jordan until the situation there becomes clear.

Bergus has prepared material for Richards on the Johnston plan[2] and proposed to him to exert strong pressure on Jordan to cooperate.

He mentioned that Congress is limiting the allocation of aid to each country to a maximum of 30 million dollars. Therefore Israel must take this maximum sum into account.

Countries that are members of the Baghdad Pact, as well as Ethiopia and Sudan, are to be included in the plan.

Later in the talk additional topics were discussed. Bergus said that the fuss made by the media concerning the success of King Saud's visit is out of all proportion. Saud will receive arms but is not a candidate for economic aid.

As for the threat of sanctions — Israel's declarations in the Knesset and to the press are giving the State Department the impression that it is looking forward to sanctions. He finds it hard to believe that the United States will use economic sanctions against Israel while not taking such measures towards other countries that have disregarded U.N. resolutions.

His impression is that the success of the Bonds and the U.J.A. compensates for any economic damage to Israel caused by the delay in the Grant in Aid and the Food Surplus Law.[3]

Bergus confirmed that the United States had wanted Israel to hold onto Gaza and thus contribute to a solution to the refugee problem. But meanwhile things had changed; speeches were made in the Knesset, various declarations were made by the prime minister, and no practical proposals were raised on the topic of Gaza. By now matters have become too complicated and they have changed their minds.

Notes

1. Before the beginning of talks between Jordan and Britain in Amman on the cancellation of the 1948 agreement between the two countries, King Hussein sent a letter to his prime minister, Nabulsi, warning him against Soviet encroachment in Jordan following the cancellation of the agreement and the ending of British economic aid to Jordan (see no. 282, note 4).
2. See no. 155, note 5.
3. See no. 25, note 1.

385. Note from the Soviet Embassy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 February 1957

Copy: 93.39/449/7

Summary

In reply to a Note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 28 December 1956,[1] the embassy of the Soviet Union announces that the contracts signed between Soviet foreign trade organisations and Israeli companies for the supply of crude oil, fuel oil and pipes to Israel have been revoked due to the fact that the government of Israel, through its belligerent actions against Egypt, has rendered it impossible to carry out these contracts.

It should be recalled that the government of the Soviet Union, in its declaration of 31 October 1956, had warned that full responsibility for the results of the operations against Egypt lies with the governments which chose the path of disrupting peace and security.

Therefore, the intent of the Israeli government to lay responsibility for revocation of the aforementioned contracts at the door of the Soviet government is groundless.

Note

1. See no. 181, note 2.

386. M. Sherman (New York) to L. Eshkol. 7 February 1957

Copy: 130.23/3088/4

Summary

Sherman says that after a conversation with the foreign minister and with Eban, it has been agreed that the following steps should be taken in Washington:

1) To enhance the efforts aimed at Congress, in order to stress the fact that at this moment in particular, when such a small country as Israel is taking in such a huge wave of immigration, the United States is placing obstacles in its path by delaying economic aid, discontinuing the negotiations on food surpluses and deferring a loan from the Export-Import Bank aimed at helping the absorption of new immigrants in agriculture.[1]

2) To conduct talks with the State Department which, rather than pointing to Israel's economic weakness, highlight its economic needs stemming from immigration and the need to develop the country. This would enable the State Department to take these needs into account when planning the use of the funds which the president has requested from Congress. The 200 million dollars allocated to the Eisenhower Doctrine also include all the allowances and economic aid for the current fiscal year which have not yet been used, i.e., also including the 25 million dollars for Israel that have been frozen. The need for these talks stems from the fact that the State Department is already making plans to allocate the funds.

Note

1. See no. 25, note 1.

387. D. Lewin (New York) to the Asian and African Division. 7 February 1957

Orig.: 130.23/3039/23

Summary

Lewin summarises the attitude of the Afro-Asian bloc to Israel, with reference to the expected vote on sanctions. In his opinion, following the vote on the 2 February resolution, in which Menon was very active,[2] one may perceive two groups within the bloc: the Arabs and the friends of Israel — Ceylon, the Philippines, Burma, Japan, Ethiopia, Liberia and Thailand.

Lewin held talks with representatives of these countries and requested their understanding and support. They expressed their sympathy for Israel's demand for non-belligerency but in his opinion, despite their stance, they will not openly support Israel without a Western initiative, particularly that of the United States.

Notwithstanding, the ties with these countries are becoming stronger, and Lewin envisages two successes: they will not support a harsh proposal by the Arabs if a more moderate proposal is made by the West and it is possible to influence the tone of their representatives' speeches at the General Assembly, which is also important. This will be achieved by the end of the session and is the maximum that may be expected.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 366.
2. Menon's stand was closest to that of Egypt. See a description of the discussion in the Assembly in *The Political Battle*, pp. 170–171.
3. See no. 373, note 5.

388. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (New York). 8 February 1957

Coded Tel. 410; Outg.: 130.02/2459/2

Summary

Ben-Gurion sends Meir a telegram repeating the main points of Israel's stand:

1) An end to belligerency, meaning freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and in the Gulf of Aqaba and an end to Fedaiyun operations.
2) Egypt does not return to Gaza.
3) Israeli administration in the Gaza Strip, in cooperation with the U.N. and local residents (for reasons of security, economics and to help find a solution to the refugee problem). It is willing to discuss details of the arrangement with the U.N.
4) Withdrawal from the coast along the Gulf of Aqaba once freedom of navigation is ensured.
5) In place of the armistice agreement, which was cancelled in fact by Egypt and which Israel absolutely refuses to renew — willingness to accept a non-aggression pact or peace with Egypt.
6) Israel will not consent to the entry of a U.N. military force into Nitzana or any other place inside Israel.[1]

Note

1. In his diary, Ben-Gurion explained the background to this telegram: "Eban is making a fatal mistake in insisting solely on non-belligerency on Egypt's part and not on the assurances which the government had decided upon. I sent a telegram yesterday to Golda, but it seems that Eban continues in his own way. Who can trust Nasser's promise?" (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 10 February 1957).

389. M. Erell (Ottawa) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 February 1957

Coded Tel. 346; Inc.: 130.09/2287/3

Summary

Erell reports on his talk with Robinson:[1]

Canada does not want the discussion which is to take place in the General Assembly, but could not see any way of dissuading the Arabs and their supporters; in their view, there is no escaping a discussion of sanctions next week. The chances of a resolution calling for sanctions seem to them no more than even, possibly less. Pearson has not yet determined how his delegation should act, and will not do so until he has the text of the resolution before him.

Canada would very much like to have details of the content of Eisenhower's note[3] and Israel's response to it.[4] The style and wording of the response may affect Canada's position.

There is disappointment in Ottawa over Hammarskjöld's handling of the crisis, but they suppose one cannot change his nature or way of thinking. On the other hand, Robinson pointed out that Israel's insistence on an Israeli administration in Gaza makes it difficult for them and for others to assist it.

The government of Canada has decided to comply with Burns' request and to send a mobile reconnaissance unit to the region. The unit will set out at the end of February.

So far Israel is benefiting from the solid support of Canadian public opinion.

Notes

1. Basil Robinson of the Middle East Division in Canada's Department of External Affairs.
2. See Editorial Note no. 366.
3. No. 371.
4. No. 390.

390. Message from Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to President Eisenhower (Washington). 8 February 1957

Copy: 93.02/204/18

Notes

1. No. 371.
2. No. 70.
3. No. 79.
4. No. 80.
5. No. 129.
6. See Editorial Note no. 366.
7. See no. 373, Appendix.
8. See no. 268, note 2.
9. This paragraph was added to the letter at Eban's suggestion, "on the basis of knowledge of the president's views on the issue of Suez and Aqaba" (see Eban to Herzog, 8 February 1957, 93.01/2185/10).

391. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 8 February 1957

Coded Tel. WIA195; Outg.: 93.01/2214/3

Summary

Eban reports that press reports from the agencies about anti-American demonstrations in Israel protesting against the threats of sanctions by the United States and against its policy[1] are causing concern, due to over-emphasis on the fear of sanctions. Reservations about sanctions are growing both in the United States and in the U.N. Israel must show it has nerves of steel and refrain from addressing the issue, but rather deal with the matter at hand, i.e., a guarantee for its security and a constructive solution for Gaza and the Straits. Eban recommends that speakers from the government at these demonstrations should abstain from attacking the United States and rather attack the U.N.

Note

1. On Saturday, 9 February, there were huge demonstrations and mass rallies in all of Israel's large cities and in other towns against withdrawal without guarantees, protesting against the threat of imposing sanctions on Israel.

Jewish organisations in the United States also initiated and organised protest activities. In a joint meeting of representatives of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations and the Jewish Agency, attended by Golda Meir, a series of actions was decided upon: sending a protest telegram in the name of 17 presidents of Jewish organisations to President Eisenhower and publishing the telegram as a paid advertisement in *The New York Times*, *The New York Herald Tribune* and *The Washington Post;* meetings for lobbying purposes by Jewish leaders with their state representatives in the House of Representatives and in the Senate and organising mass rallies (see Herlitz to the United States division, 8 February 1957, 93.03/3064/5).

392. Meeting: S. Arad — D. Bergus (Washington, 7 February 1957)

Report: 130.23/3088/3

Summary

Arad reports on a talk with Bergus on the practical preparations for carrying out the Eisenhower Doctrine. As soon as the doctrine is approved by the Senate, Lawson will formally propose a date for a visit by Richards and his mission, whose participants have already been determined. Burdett will serve as the secretary of the mission. Bergus proposes to establish a committee in Israel comprised of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and the IDF (similar to the group that met with Eric Johnston[3] on his visit to Israel), and will try to prepare material and plans ahead of Richards' visit.

As for Israel-U.S. relations, Bergus said that he is not concerned about the threat of sanctions. He does not believe that the Assembly has the required authority or that the situation will deteriorate to that point. At the same time, Israel must know that there are circles in the State Department which are considering the possibility of penalties. He is concerned about the present situation which is characterised by inflexibility in talks and sterility in relations.

Israel must stop seeing every instance of disagreement between itself and the United States as a life-and-death issue. One example of American-Israeli cooperation on matters vital to the region was Lawson's talks with the prime minister about stationing Iraqi units in Jordan.[4]

Concerning Aqaba, Bergus said that Colombia had proposed to the United States the idea of naval patrols under U.N. auspices in the Straits as a solution to the demand for guarantees on the one hand, and the problem of obtaining Egypt's consent to the stationing of forces on its sovereign territory on the other hand.

The talk ended with a discussion of King Saud's visit to the United States. Bergus claimed that he still does not know all details of the talks. His impression is

that the subject at hand was military aid, which will be paid for, but not economic aid. He cannot think of a way to justify economic aid to Saud to Congress. As for Egypt — Ambassador Hare has left for Cairo and he does not bring any glad tidings to Nasser.

Notes

1. Loy Henderson, deputy undersecretary of state for administration.
2. Frederick Reinhardt, counsellor in the State Department.
3. See no. 155, note no. 5.
4. See Editorial Note no. 1.
5. See Editorial Note no. 376.
6. The Iraqi crown prince, Emir Abd al-Ilah, arrived in Washington on a formal visit on 5 February.

393. M. Fischer (Rome) to the Director of the West European Division. 8 February 1957

Orig.: 130.23/3102/18

Summary

Fischer reports on attempts by supporters of Israel in the Vatican to arrange meetings for him in the Secretariat of State in order to discuss the possibility of a concordat between the Vatican and Israel, the situation of the Catholic minorities in Israel, and the joint interests of the Catholic Church and Israel in the international arena.

These requests were turned down, but Monsignor Samorè[1] explained that the refusal was temporary, and when the present acute phase of the conflict between Israel and its neighbours was over, the Secretariat of State would be happy to receive an official representative of Israel.

Sources at the Vatican told Fischer that the Pope's personal attitude towards Israel is definitely a positive one.

Notes

1. Antonio Samorè, the Vatican vice under-secretary of state.
2. See Fischer's report on his mission to the Vatican, no. 438.

394. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 9 February 1957

Coded Circ. Tel. 796; Inc.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Eytan informs the missions that Israel has decided not to reply to the secretary-general but to insist on its demand that he reply to its questions first, so that the General Assembly will convene against the backdrop of disagreement with the secretary-general not only on the issue of evacuation but also on the issue of Egypt's position.

As for the secretary-general's claim that Israel is demanding a reply from Egypt under duress, they should reply that he wishes to handle the issue when Israel is under duress regarding the blockade and the Fedaiyun.

Eytan instructs the missions, when addressing the governments of their countries, to stress the strong public opposition to sanctions in the United States[1] and the Administration's hesitation. Efforts must be made to avoid creating the impression that the United States is in favour of sanctions, since that would have an effect on other countries within its sphere of influence.

Note

1. See no. 382, note 2.

395. J. Tsur (Paris) to L. Eshkol and W. Eytan. 9 February 1957

Coded Tel. 628; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

In a talk with the acting French foreign minister, Gazier, devoted mostly to French aid in case of the imposition of sanctions[1] on Israel, Tsur expressed his concern that there may be difficulties in the practical expression of France's good will, due to slowness and even passive obstruction by some of the services, as happened with the issue of the oil pipeline.

Gazier confirmed that the government is willing to help in the case of sanctions and is aware of the difficulties. He promised to follow up personally on carrying

out the government's plans. However, he stressed that France's economy is doing poorly and its ability to help is limited. It has no foreign currency or oil, and it is feared that in case of sanctions, the sources of fuel will be limited further. They would of course share with Israel what they have, but it is best if Israel has no illusions as to the scope of aid that may be expected.

He is certain that should it become known internationally that France is continuing to help Israel despite the decision taken by other countries, and particularly the United States, to abstain from aid, this may cause pressure which France cannot withstand. He therefore recommends minimising any talk of French aid in the case of sanctions, and to instruct all Israel's representatives accordingly. Because of Gazier's status, as he is the minister closest to the prime minister both in the party and in the government, Tsur suggests that special attention be paid to his warning.

Note

1. See no. 357

396. M. Comay (New York) to the International Organizations Division. 9 February 1957

Coded Tel. XA455; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

In light of the forthcoming submission of the Labouisse[1] Report as part of the discussion on the situation of the refugees at the U.N. Assembly, Comay held talks with him and with Jamieson[2] about the situation in the Gaza Strip.

Both contended that UNRWA will be in a difficult situation if Israel remains in the Gaza Strip despite U.N. resolutions. This would seriously aggravate the relations of the Agency both with the refugees and with the Arab states, who already accuse them of collaboration with Israel. Comay replied that UNRWA is a humanitarian body which must care for refugees under all circumstances and therefore must cooperate with any de facto existing regime.

Comay described in detail the new horizons which an Israeli administration opens up for the Gaza Strip, and eventually for the refugees, and requested that during his talks in Washington (including those with the secretary of state and possibly also with the president) Labouisse give a true and factual picture of the Egyptian regime and of the possibilities emanating from cooperation with Israel.

In addition, the Agency in general was discussed — its dire financial situation and its future after its mandate comes to an end in 1960.

Notes

1. See no. 222, note 4.
2. The director of UNRWA in the Gaza Strip.
3. The paragraph omitted here contains detailed descriptions of the activities of UNRWA in the Gaza Strip.
4. Haim Gaon, military governor of the Gaza Strip from November 1956 to February 1957.
5. Rashid al-Shawa, mayor of the city of Gaza.

397. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 10 February 1957

Coded Tel.: AX488; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Kidron summarises the Hammarskjöld-Eban meeting of 10 February. The secretary-general asked about Israel's replies to his questions,[2] while Eban was interested in Egypt's answers to Israel's questions forwarded to it via Hammarskjöld, to which it had not yet responded. Eban was not able to obtain an answer from the secretary-general.

In Israel's opinion, progress should be made in several stages:

1) Mutual commitment on the part of Egypt and Israel to abstain from belligerency.
2) Willingness on Israel's part to evacuate the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba, following the receipt of appropriate assurances.
3) Willingness on the part of Israel to withdraw its troops from the Gaza Strip.
4) A discussion with the U.N. on the non-military aspects of the Gaza issue.

The secretary-general responded sharply by saying that as far as he sees Israel has not budged an inch from its position, which is in opposition to the General Assembly's decision of 2 February. He asked whether Israel would be prepared to affirm its full compliance with the armistice agreement on a mutual basis. Eban asked what Egypt's position was, to which the secretary-general replied that Egypt is willing to affirm the agreement but he is not authorised to say that this affirmation also includes a commitment to end the maritime blockades.

The secretary-general further noted that there was also no change in Israel's position on the Gaza issue. Bunche asked whether it would allow the entry of

UNEF into the Strip. Eban replied that he cannot give an answer so long as there is no answer on belligerency and the nature and function of the force. Hammarskjöld said that he has to report to the Assembly tomorrow and that he will publish Israel's aide mémoire, as well as the letters, as annexes to the report.

Notes

1. In this telegram Kidron reported the main points of the meeting with Hammarskjöld (see Kidron to Herzog, XA 487, 10 February 1957, 93.01/2185/10).
2. The minutes are in file 130.02/2448 and were not printed here.
3. No. 378.
4. No. 273, Appendix
5. No. 347.
6. In a mass rally in Tel Aviv on 9 February protesting against withdrawal without guarantees, Yigal Allon condemned the distortion of the purpose of the U.N. and called for the resignation of the U.N. secretary-general.

398. A. Eban to the U.N. Secretary-General (New York). 10 February 1957

Copy: U.N. Archives DAG–1/ 2.25.52: 17

Notes

1. No. 378.
2. No. 373, Appendix.
3. See no. 378, note 4.
4. See Editorial Note no. 366.

399. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Rome. 10 February 1957

Coded Tel.: 842; Outg.: 130.09/2357/7

Summary

Eytan reports that Italian Ambassador Capomazza[1] was received by the prime minister on 8 February and told him Italy's position on Israel's demands.[2] He advised complying with the U.N. resolutions. The prime minister replied that all

U.N. resolutions ought to be carried out, not only those that deal with the Gulf of Aqaba and Gaza.

Capomazza asked if a distinction could not be made between the Gulf and Gaza. With regard to the Gulf, Israel would not be taking a risk by evacuating its troops, because such a step would be followed by general support of its rights. Evacuating Gaza does however involve a risk. The prime minister replied that the question of the Gulf is not guaranteed in advance either. Israel does not wish to remain in Sharm el-Sheikh, but it requires guarantees. There are reports that Nasser intends to prevent the passage of Israeli ships in the Canal and in the Straits in practice, even if he is forced to agree to it in principle. Should Italy and the United States, with or without Britain and France, guarantee in advance freedom of navigation, Israel will immediately evacuate its forces, even if a resolution to that effect is not taken at the General Assembly.

In response to Capomazza's questions, the prime minister said that there is a definite chance that sanctions will be imposed. He stressed that Israel will not agree to the stationing of a U.N. force on the Israeli side of the border. He further stressed that Israel will not tolerate a U.N. attitude that discriminates against it compared with Egypt.

Notes

1. In this telegram Sasson reported that Capomazza was given the following task: a) to convey that the government of Italy understands Israel's position, is sympathetic to its cause and is willing to help; b) to explain how strongly the United States is insisting that Israel comply with the Assembly's resolution on withdrawal, and to advise it to reconsider its position and avoid bringing its relations with the United States to the point of a serious crisis; c) to explain that the United States, and the Western countries with it, will do everything in their power to ensure the guarantees that Israel requires regarding navigation in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba and non-belligerence on the part of Egypt in the Gaza Strip and elsewhere in the Sinai (see Sasson to Eytan, Tel. 148, 7 February 1957, 130.02/2459/11).
2. The Constantinople Convention of 1888, see no. 257, note 1.

400. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and W. Eytan. 10 February 1957

Coded Tel. 153; Inc.: 130.09/23581/1

Summary

Sasson reports on a talk with Rossi Longhi, secretary-general of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, concerning the impasse in the talks between Eban and Hammarskjöld and its causes. In addition he delivered a personal letter containing the text of the aide mémoire addressed to the secretary-general[1] and requested that he instruct their mission to the U.N. to take action against condemnation of Israel and sanctions.

Rossi Longhi replied as follows:

1) Their mission to the U.N. has not yet asked for instructions as to how to vote in case a draft resolution on condemnation and sanctions is submitted when the discussion is resumed at the General Assembly.
2) In light of the severity of the situation and the urgency of the matter, he promised to pass on the request for discussion in the Ministry and a decision by his government. He is certain that a decision acceptable to Israel will be taken, at least on the subject of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and in the Suez Canal, and on providing assurances against the use of the Gaza Strip as a base for Fedaiyun operations on the part of Egypt. He cannot promise support for Israeli administration in the Gaza Strip.
3) His government recognises the justice of Israel's demands for guarantees, and is convinced that this position also serves the interests of Western Europe and of the entire free world.
4) Their ambassador to the United States, who arrived in Rome for consultations, has reported that public opinion in the United States is opposed to imposing sanctions on Israel, and that there is resentment of the fact that the United States and the U.N. are not granting Israel's requests for guarantees. However the White House and the State Department have decided to insist on withdrawal in order to gain the full trust of the Afro-Asians and curb Russian penetration into the Middle East and Asia.
5) The ambassador added that the United States is prepared to accept Nasser's terms on the status of the Canal and is trying to persuade France and Britain to accept its position in order to halt his anti-Western propaganda in the Middle East and in Asia, which only serves Soviet interests. The Americans feel even more strongly about this following their talks with King Saud.[2]

6) The ambassador has no doubt that the secretary-general is acting in accordance with the wishes and policy of the United States, and that his firm stand on Israel is at the behest of Lodge.

Notes

1. No. 375, Appendix.
2. See Editorial Note no. 376.

401. R. Pilpoul (Addis Ababa) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 10 February 1957

Coded Tel. 61; Inc.: 130.15/3740/9

Summary

Since Pilpoul feels he cannot rely on the position of the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry on Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh, he managed to arrange an interview with the emperor, through Tamrat,[1] without the knowledge of the Ministry. The emperor expressed his opinion that, unlike Britain and France, Israel is not an aggressor but rather was forced to defend its existence. He expressed full understanding of its position that there should be no withdrawal from Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh without appropriate assurances, though on Gaza he thinks that the presence of a U.N. force until a final arrangement is reached may be sufficient. At Pilpoul's request, the emperor promised to have a telegram sent to the Ethiopian mission to the U.N., instructing them to show understanding for Israel's demand for assurances. Pilpoul believes that Ethiopia will not join the sanctions and will even oppose them within the Afro-Asian bloc.

In addition the emperor will not object to stepping up Israel's anti-Egyptian propaganda in his country through leaflets, brochures, pictures and announcements, and also gave his permission for publications in Amharic.

Notes

1. Emmanuel Tamrat, an Ethiopian Jew who was close to the emperor. Former advisor on cultural affairs at the embassy of Ethiopia in Paris.
2. Word missing in the original.
3. The reference is to the prime minister's announcement in the Knesset on 22 January, see Editorial Note no. 338.

402. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to W. Eytan. 10 February 1957

Copy: 130.02/2448/6

Summary

As Israel has decided to remain in control of the Gaza Strip in some form or other, Bartur believes it has no choice but to assume responsibility for the 200,000 refugees inhabiting it.

He suggests the following plan:

1) Israel will state at the Assembly that it is imperative that Gaza remain under Israeli administration, as no alternative arrangement can guarantee its security.
2) Israel acknowledges that since there are over 200,000 refugees in the Gaza Strip for whom the U.N. bears responsibility, it is necessary to have U.N. supervision of the Israeli administration in the Strip.
3) Israel has always declared its willingness to contribute its share to resolve the refugee problem. Now a practical possibility presents itself for a permanent solution for 30% of the Arab refugees. Israel takes upon itself, together with the U.N. and with international support, to take measures for settling these refugees both inside and outside Israel.
4) An international committee will be established which will examine options for settling the refugees inside and outside Israel, and the Israeli administration in the Gaza Strip, together with the U.N. institutions there, will be responsible for implementation of the committee's recommendations.
5) The constitution of the committee must include equal numbers of representatives.

Such a proposal offers an opportunity for instant political gain and sharing of the burden of the refugee problem with the U.N. and the United States. If it is brought before the General Assembly, it may serve to break the deadlock and at least prompt continuation of the discussion with the addition of a new element.

403. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 11 February 1957

Coded Tel. 294; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Shiloah sums up Dulles' talk with Eban, attended by Murphy, Wilkins and himself.

The secretary opened by saying that the president and he had read the prime minister's note[1] and prepared a reply in the form of an aide mémoire. He added that the United States understands Israel's justifiable concerns, but believes that the aide mémoire[2] contains a response to its demands.

Eban again explained Israel's policy on the controversial issues. He expressed harsh criticism of the U.N. secretary-general for bringing affairs to an impasse by refusing to ask Egypt for its stand on the question of belligerency. He proposed a four-step solution:

1) Egypt's commitment to non-belligerency.
2) Ensuring effective measures to prevent a renewed blockade of the Gulf.
3) Withdrawal of the IDF from Sharm el-Sheikh.
4) Withdrawal of the IDF from the Gaza Strip and negotiations with the U.N. on civilian arrangements in Gaza.

Dulles replied that the U.S. government is sympathetic to Israel's cause; it believes that the route taken by Britain, France and Israel was an erroneous one which has brought about severe repercussions. He suggested that Israel take seriously the American commitment to guarantee freedom of navigation as expressed in the aide mémoire. It is of far higher value than any non-belligerency commitment that may be provided by Nasser, who is not trustworthy. The United States would not make such a commitment if it did not think it could live up to it. As for the oil pipeline — should Israel continue to hold onto Sharm el-Sheikh, the pipeline may still be laid, but no serious body would risk transporting oil through it. The situation will be different once the United States and other countries undertake to prevent interference with maritime transportation.

Eban requested a clarification from Dulles concerning the U.S. stand on Gaza: does it demand the withdrawal of the civil administration from Gaza Strip or only a military withdrawal? Dulles retorted that he is not well-versed in the problem and that the United States has not yet taken a final stand.

Dulles continued by raising the issue of sanctions, claiming that the threat was not serious but that it was far more serious if Israel and the United States could not cooperate in their efforts to dispel tension in the region.

Further to the talk with the secretary, a discussion was held with Murphy, in which he made it clear that:

1) The statements made in the aide mémoire concerning the U.S. stand on navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba will be made public and it is expected that other maritime nations, including Israel, will join in with similar statements. The reassurance that every maritime nation will exercise its navigation rights and protect them constitutes the essence of the guarantee, but for good measure a U.N. force is also to be deployed in the Straits of Tiran. The United States believes that the very declaration of its intent to exercise American navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba makes it in effect an international waterway. Dulles intended to publicise the announcement immediately, but it was decided to bring other countries into this arrangement.
2) Murphy demonstrated a certain degree of flexibility on the subject of leaving the civil administration in Gaza, but firmly insisted on the stationing of a U.N. force. There is no chance that Egypt will transfer its rights to Israel; at most, there is a chance that it may transfer them to the U.N.

Eban and Shiloah suggested that a preliminary discussion be held between them and the State Department on the issues of administration in the Gaza Strip, under the assumption that if they arrive at a joint agreed plan, it will facilitate reaching a version that will be acceptable to the General Assembly. They further proposed that the United States influence Hammarskjöld to postpone discussions at the General Assembly as much as possible, in order to enable continued talks.

The above discussion made it clear that from a procedural point of view Dulles expects Israel to try and reach an agreement with him, based on the aide mémoire, and the United States would handle matters in the U.N. and with Hammarskjöld. Hammarskjöld's proposals on operating the Suez Canal are very disappointing. Eban and Shiloah proposed to delay the opening of the Canal until Nasser consents to an agreed interpretation of the six principles,[5] and particularly the principle of free navigation for all nations.

Notes

1. No. 390.
2. No. 404.
3. Unclear in the original.
4. See Editorial Note no. 45.
5. See no. 9, note 1.

404. Aide Mémoire from the Department of State to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 11 February 1957

Copy: 130.02/5938/3

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 366.
2. The pilgrimage to Mecca.
3. Dulles approached the leaders of the Senate on behalf of the president, and informed them that the U.S. commitment to protect free navigation through the Gulf could turn into a military obligation, and that the president would apply to the Senate only if the use of force was called for. However he believed that the deterrent power of this commitment was sufficient (see Eban to the prime minister, NWTA 305, 11 February 1957, 93.01/2186; Eban stated that the source of the report was Senator Javits, who received it clandestinely from Senator Knowland).

405. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 11 February 1957

Coded Tel. WIA205; Outg.: 93.01/2186/2

Summary

Eban reports that the threat of sanctions is collapsing under the pressure of the Senate[1] and the press. The United States has informed Hammarskjöld that it does not intend to follow that path. A detailed discussion has now begun, on the basis of the document given to him by Dulles.

He consulted with Benjamin Cohen[2] who said that in terms of the conservative legal custom followed by the United States, its commitment on navigation rights is far-reaching; nonetheless, stationing a U.N. force in the Gulf of Aqaba is essential during the first months, to let the custom take hold. He stressed the importance of Panama and Liberia joining in, since it is under their flags that most U.S shipping sails.

Notes

1. Senator Knowland had protested against the U.N.'s policy (see no. 377), and a group of Democratic and Republican senators had approached the administration with the request to avoid making unilateral demands on Israel (see no. 383, note 2). In addition, on 11 February Lyndon Johnson, the leader of the Senate Democratic majority, wrote a strong letter to Dulles, in which he demanded that the latter instruct Lodge to object

to the best of his ability at the U.N. General Assembly to any proposal of imposing sanctions on Israel. Johnson claimed that the U.N.'s failure to impose sanctions on the Soviet Union after the crushing of the uprising in Hungary illustrated the lack of even-handedness in the U.N.'s attitude towards Israel (*FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 83, pp. 139–140).

2. One of the chief advisors of the leadership of the Democratic Party.

406. M. Comay (New York) to J. Herzog. 11 February 1957

Coded Tel. 429; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Comay reports on Pearson's talk with Foreign Minister Meir, also attended by himself and by Léger.[1] Pearson said the following:

1) Dulles is only now personally getting involved in the matter and is attempting to break the impasse. Sanctions would be a disaster, but this possibility cannot be eliminated if there is no change in the situation.
2) Pearson has changed his mind about the secretary-general's ability to mediate in conflicts, as he is an international official who can only act within the framework of U.N. resolutions. In his opinion, it is preferable to enlist several responsible governments that would make reasonable proposals. Such a proposal would serve as a basis for continued action and would strengthen Israel's political and moral position.
3) He approved of the idea of American guarantees in the Gulf of Aqaba and assumed that it would solve the problem.
4) He pushed for reconsidering a token presence of UNEF on the Israel side of the border; otherwise it will not be possible to create a U.N.-held area in Sinai, and the entire idea of UNEF might collapse.
5) Gaza. He agrees that the issue is a complex one and requires thorough study. In order to make this possible and get support for the non-return of the Egyptians, Israel must consent to the withdrawal of its forces and the entry of UNEF. As well, Israel should also consent in principle to gradual replacement of the current regime with a new, agreed-upon one. This would entail sending a U.N. delegation to Gaza to inspect and supervise, but it will not be easy to obtain the General Assembly's approval. This is the most that can be achieved in the bounds of political reality. Should Israel refuse and continue holding the Gaza Strip, this would be interpreted as forceful annexation of territory.
6) The foreign minister explained Israel's stand on all the above points, while emphasising the security problem and its ramifications for the plans to settle the Negev, especially for new immigrants.

Notes

1. Jules Léger, under-secretary of state for external affairs of Canada.
2. Two border zones which became foci of extended conflict between the two countries bordering on them. After the British left India in 1947, relations between India and Pakistan took a turn for the worse due to the dispute over Kashmir, where most of the population was Muslim but whose ruler decided on annexation to India. In 1948 a war broke out between the two countries, and at the end of the fighting Kashmir was divided between them.
   Alsace-Lorraine, in northeast France on the German border, was annexed to Germany after the 1870 war and remained under its rule until World War I. After the war Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France.
3. The letter was not found.

407. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 12 February 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA307; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Following the talk with Dulles[1], the secretary-general's announcement made under the influence of the United States[2] and the discussion in the Senate,[3] Eban sees a positive change in the U.S. attitude to Israel, and he analyses the background to this change.

The sympathy for Israel among the American public, the administration's disappointment with and distaste for Nasser, growing disenchantment with the U.N. and reluctance to accept Hammarskjöld's authority on matters that are vital to the United States — all these contributed to the decision by Eisenhower and Dulles to take matters into their own hands before they get embroiled in a domestic and international disaster.

In his opinion, Israel must immediately respond affirmatively to the Dulles initiative despite disagreements on the Gaza issue. Rejecting the plan[4] will cause a loss of positive international public opinion and of the first chance of obtaining an American military assurance on a matter vital to Israel.

The Gulf of Aqaba

1) Dulles defines the international nature of the Gulf in straightforward terms, in contrast to Hammarskjöld's contortions on the same subject.
2) The declarations to be made by the United States and other powers determine the open and universal nature of the Gulf. The plans for the pipeline and for the development of the port of Eilat have become considerably more tangible.

3) The U.S. announcement that it will exercise the right of passage in those waters and will invite other countries to do so is a far-reaching one, and implies an expansion of American security commitments in the Middle East. Nonetheless, the stationing of U.N. representatives or observers should be considered an important addition to the guarantees.

Gaza

1) The solid thing about the plan is the entry of a U.N. force and the withdrawal of Israel forces. All the rest remains open, for better or worse.
2) The danger of the return of Egypt's civil administration has not been removed, and the main point in Israel's response must be the ruling out of any possibility of an Egyptian return to Gaza.

Eban proposes the following guidelines for action:

1) To reject any involvement by the General Assembly; this requires promptly informing Dulles of Israel's agreement, in principle, to cooperate with his plan.
2) To announce immediately Israel's willingness to solve the Gulf problem by adopting Dulles' plan: the announcement by the maritime nations; the evacuation of the IDF; the stationing of UNEF and defining its functions in coordination with the United States.
3) To give consent to the evacuation of the IDF from Gaza and the entry of the U.N., perhaps not necessarily of UNEF but of U.N. representatives. On the other hand, an announcement must be made stating Israel's objection to the return of Egypt in any form and Israel should be willing to discuss the problems of civil administration with U.N. representatives.

A visit by the foreign minister to Israel is also required, in order to clarify a few details in this plan, assuming of course that the session of the Assembly will be postponed. Such a visit will help in achieving a postponement.

Notes

1. No. 403
2. On 11 February Hammarskjöld submitted his report to the General Assembly (the report was marked as U.N. document A/3511, the document is in file 130.16/2955/12 and has not been printed here). The secretary-general referred in his report to Israel's non-compliance with the Assembly's resolution of 2 February calling for withdrawal from the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip (see Editorial Note no. 366), and reported on the impasse in the talks between him and the Israeli representatives.
   Despite the above, a shift could be seen in Hammarskjöld's attitude, brought about by U.S. pressure, which also succeeded in postponing the session of the General Assembly. This shift was manifested in his expression of reservations on the proposal to impose sanctions on Israel, both on legal grounds and in terms of their wisdom and usefulness.
   At the same time, Hammarskjöld rejected Israel's demands for assurances that Egypt would forego its claims to belligerency status and stressed that as long as Israel

stubbornly refused to abide by U.N. resolutions, he could not approach Egypt with any demands or questions.

Israel's stand was presented in an aide mémoire (see no. 373, appendix) and in a series of letters exchanged between Eban and the secretary-general from the beginning of February, which were attached to the report.

3. At that time the Eisenhower Doctrine was being discussed in the Senate in order to obtain its approval.
4. No. 404.
5. See no. 404, note 3.
6. No. 217, note 3.
7. Ben-Gurion commented on Eban's reaction after the talks with Dulles and Murphy: "Eban saw this talk as a fundamental change and practically as having saved the day. Telegram after telegram poured in, full of endless enthusiasm and optimism" (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 16 February 1957).

408. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 12 February 1957

Coded Tel. TNW102; Outg.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Ben-Gurion informs Eban that the government will meet soon to discuss the aide mémoire from the State Department and Dulles' proposals.[1] He submits his comments:

1) The aide mémoire does demonstrate a wish for a positive solution, but the solution proposed is not positive and Israel cannot accept it.
2) There are no assurances for Israeli navigation, and the freedom described is limited to "innocent" passage. He asks what constitutes innocent passage and who will check if the passage is indeed "innocent."
3) Under no circumstances will Israel return to the armistice agreement.
4) Israel will not agree to the stationing of a U.N. force in Nitzana.
5) On Gaza there is room for compromise, and Israel will consent to evacuate its armed forces on two conditions:
   (a) That the Egyptians do not return.
   (b) That a partnership be established between an Israeli administration and the U.N., possibly with the participation of the local residents in the administration.

In his opinion Israel should not budge from this position even at the risk of sanctions.

In view of the goodwill displayed by the Administration, Ben-Gurion asks whether it is possible to have serious discussions between Israel and the United States so as to remove the subject from the General Assembly.

Note

1. Nos. 403, 404.

409. A. Eban (Washington) to the Prime Minister (Jerusalem) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (New York). 12 February 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA198–199; Outg.: 93.01/2186/4

Summary

Eban responds with serious concern to Ben-Gurion's reservations about the Dulles plan.[1] He fears there may have been a grave misunderstanding of the nature of the document and the international circumstances. To avert disaster, he sees fit to present him without delay with explanations to the document, which were given to him as formulated after thorough consultations with political and legal experts.

He explains in detail the concepts of free passage and innocent passage. In his opinion, this lays the foundation for the American assurances of freedom of navigation through the Straits and in the Gulf, and turning the Gulf into a de facto international waterway. Israel would bear a heavy responsibility if it were to reject such a generous gesture on the part of the United States. The chances that there will be international navigation there, including oil supply, are better with this agreement than in the scenario whereby Israel remains in Sharm el-Sheikh without any recognition by the maritime nations and under circumstances that will guarantee war.

The problem is to decide whether Israel approves of this step in principle, while insisting on certain amendments. In his view, the reply in principle must be affirmative and should be given promptly, in order to continue with clarifying details and making amendments.

Eban agrees with Ben-Gurion that there are points of disagreement between Israel and the United States on the issue of the armistice agreement and stationing a U.N. force in Nitzana. The discussions and negotiations on these matters will continue. But every effort must be made in order to achieve that which is within reach and not to miss the opportune moment.

Notes

1. No. 408
2. See no. 268, note 2.
3. In this paragraph it says: "There is a fundamental gap between the [American] document and the description provided to the leaders of the Senate [see no. 404, note 3], since there is no commitment to protect free navigation but to emphasise the international character of the Gulf through the passage of American ships. The immediate question is, of course, that this was of no use in the Suez [Canal]" (see Herzog to Eban and Shiloah, TNWA 107, 12 February 1957, 130.02/2459/2).

410. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog (Jerusalem) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (New York). 12 February 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA197; Inc.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Eban reports on a talk with Murphy for clarifications, also attended by Shiloah and Bergus. The Americans will be satisfied if, at the first stage, Israel expresses willingness in principle to solve the problems in line with the Dulles aide mémoire and begins discussing steps for implementation. There seems to be an option of carrying out the part of the plan referring to the Straits at the first stage without waiting for elaboration and clarification of all details involved in evacuating the Gaza Strip.

On Suez, Murphy said that the United States supports freedom of navigation for Israel there too, and will act towards full compliance with the 1888 Convention.

Eban and Shiloah emphatically reiterated Israel's objection to the return of Egypt to the Gaza Strip in any shape or form. Murphy expressed his understanding but stressed the difficulty of convincing the General Assembly on political grounds, and the difficulty of refuting the legal assumption according to which Egypt has a right to the Strip anchored in the armistice agreement. The Assembly cannot strip Egypt of its rights as expressed in that agreement.

Eban and Shiloah promised to try and expedite Israel's response, but stressed that it is quite possible that no final decision on all items of the plan would be taken without a visit to Israel by the foreign minister and Eban. This situation would necessitate an effort on the part of the United States to prevent the resumption of discussions at the General Assembly.

411. G. Avner (London) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 12 February 1957

Coded Tel. 349; Inc.: 130/09/2321/6

Summary

Avner reports on his conversation with Rose, the director of the Levant Department in the British Foreign Office, and his deputy, further to Coded Circ. Tel. 789.[1] Rose expressed support for Pearson's proposal for finding a way out of the impasse. Britain's efforts are aimed at achieving a second, more specific and unambiguous resolution on free navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, and the need for the U.N. General Assembly and the U.N. force to see to it that this principle is indeed acted upon. It is hoped that such a resolution will provide Israel with satisfactory assurances, enabling it to withdraw, and that their efforts will lead to the Assembly refraining from sanctions at this point. However, if such a proposal is nevertheless submitted, without Israel's receiving any assurances as suggested by Pearson, they will not support it and will abstain from voting. Britain would not be able to vote against it because of Nuri al-Said. In his present dangerous domestic situation, he would have to prevent the supply of oil to Britain in order to protect his own interests.

Britain is consulting with the United States and France on a response to the Soviet note regarding the Middle East.[2]

Notes

1. In this telegram Eytan reviewed the changes in the second draft resolution adopted in the General Assembly on 2 February. Eytan also instructed the Israeli representatives to put forward Israel's demand for the termination of the state of war with Egypt and to present the discriminatory approach inherent in the threat of imposing sanctions on it (see Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, no. 789, 8 February 1957, 93.04/326/5).
2. See no. 412

412. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the East European Division. 12 February 1957

Coded Tel. 995; Inc.: 130.02/2459/11

Summary

Avidar reports on a speech given by Shepilov before the Supreme Soviet about the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the international situation. Touching on the Middle East, he mentioned the Soviet approach to the three Western powers on 11 February,[1] in which it was suggested to develop a joint solution to the region's security issues, based on the following: keeping the peace by settling differences in peaceful ways; non-interference in countries' domestic affairs; refraining from pushing the states of the region into military blocs; evacuating foreign military forces and closing down military bases; discontinuing the supply of arms to states of the region; economic development aid to the region without any political preconditions.

With regard to the results of the aggression against Egypt, Shepilov said the following:

1) The Soviet Union insists on the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Egyptian territory, and responsibility for non-withdrawal will fall squarely on Israel.
2) The Soviet Union supports Egypt in its demand for compensation for the damage caused to it by acts of aggression.
3) Egypt is the legal owner of the Suez Canal, and should not be forced to forego its ownership rights.
4) Freedom of navigation in the Canal can be solved only via negotiations which will consider Egypt's sovereignty and the rightful claims of others.

Note

1. The Soviet plan, which in fact was a rehash of previous drafts submitted by the Soviet Union to the West, was raised specifically at this time in order to serve as a counterweight to the Eisenhower Doctrine on the Middle East. See Tsur's talk with Laloy, director of the European department at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with regard to the Soviet note (Tsur to Eytan and the West European division, Tel. 650, 13 February 1957, 72.2/915/30).

413. S. Marcuse[1] (Tunis) to J. Tsur (Paris). 12 February 1957

Copy: 130.23/3103/21

Summary

Marcuse reports on his talk with Abd al-Aziz Mathari, the chief of Habib Bourguiba's[2] personal bureau who is considered one of the president's chief advisors. In their talk, Marcuse highlighted the advantages which Tunisia could obtain from ties with Israel and the benefit that it could reap from Israel's experience in agriculture.

Mathari stressed that Tunisia's view of the problem of Israel is not the same as that of other Arab countries. He requests that contacts remain unofficial for the time being. This should be understood in light of Tunisia's unique situation and its relations with Middle East countries, but should be seen as a temporary state of affairs.

In their talk, Marcuse raised three problems for which he requested an answer:

1) The possibility of sending an Israeli technical advisor who is an expert on building work villages and youth villages.
2) The possibility of inviting a small delegation of high-ranking officials from Tunisia to Israel.
3) To what extent is Tunisia prepared to prove its attitude towards Israel, for example by consenting to the issue of tourist visas, or granting diplomatic status to a special representative? This would be a first step towards establishing relations in the future and a gesture of good will.

Mathari promised to raise all these issues with the relevant parties, and even to recommend an affirmative response.

Notes

1. Shmuel Marcuse, an emissary of the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency in Tunisia.
2. Habib Bourguiba, president and prime minister of Tunisia.
3. First secretary at the Israel embassy in Paris.

414. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Meir (New York) and J. Herzog (Jerusalem). 13 February 1957

Coded Tel. WNT200; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Eban is pushing for immediate Israeli consent to the Dulles proposal before the State Department has second thoughts.

In his opinion, the following steps should be taken:

1) They should inform Dulles as soon as possible that Israel is willing to reach an agreement with the United States in order to fulfil the objectives set out in its aide mémoire. [3]
2) They should state that in Israel's opinion it is advisable to solve the Gulf question first, since there is already a basis for an agreement in principle and there has been progress in clarifying the issues.
3) They should obtain further explanations about some assumptions and terms used in the State Department's aide mémoire, such as "free and innocent," "join with others" etc., and also clarify the function of the units of UNEF to be stationed in the Straits and the duration of their stay.
4) They should approach other nations (including Britain, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, etc.), let them know that Israel has had a proposal from the United States, ask whether they would be interested in joining such a policy and request them to state what they intend to do if their passage through the Straits is impeded.

As soon as Israel embarks on a matter-of-fact discussion with the United States based on such an understanding, perhaps tensions would ease both in Washington and in the U.N., and it would have some respite, even though Eban cannot envisage Israel drawing out the process as it did with Hammarskjöld.

Notes

1. See for example a report of a phone call between Dulles and Eisenhower (in Thomasville, Georgia) on 12 February, *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 88, p. 147.
2. No. 404.
3. No. 373, Appendix.
4. See Editorial Note no. 376.
5. No. 403.

415. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 13 February 1957

Coded Tel. 218; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Shiloah expresses deep concern over the fact that the Israeli mission apparently has not succeeded in communicating to the Foreign Ministry in Israel a correct and exhaustive description of the American proposal and the fundamental shift which it represents in the Administration's policy. He has no doubt that for the first time there is a real possibility of American guarantees on a matter that is vital to Israel.

Considerable forces fought against Israel and exerted pressure — whether because of the U.N. or general pro-Arab considerations — not to give any weight to Israel's apprehensions until it fully complies with the U.N. resolutions on withdrawal. The president was convinced that Israel is in the right and tipped the scales in Israel's favour; but he may be nearing the end of his tether and his patience must not be tried any further.

Shiloah requests that the ambassador be allowed to respond in the affirmative to the proposal immediately, while at the same time asking for clarifications and explanations, delaying a final decision on disputed issues until the arrival in Israel of the foreign minister and the ambassador.

416. D. Lewin (New York) to the Asian and African Division. 13 February 1957

Copy: 130.15/3747/28

Summary

Lewin reports on a talk with Foroughi[1] whose aim was to clarify the future of Israeli activities in Iran.

In Foroughi's opinion, there is a wide stratum of intellectuals, both in the government and in academia, who very much want ties with Israel. The Sinai Campaign strengthened the propaganda of the fanatical Muslims to such an extent that the minister of foreign affairs himself was forced to be cautious and silent.

He is convinced, however, that during this period, which may last for another six months, ties should be maintained mostly with intellectual circles, since this is the most approachable group of people. The development of commercial ties between Israel and Iran will also help in promoting relations between the two countries.

Foroughi sees Doriel's presence in Teheran as essential; he has been very successful and it is desirable that he stay in Iran without any change in his formal function for the next few months. In light of the above, Lewin highly recommends not making any changes in the definition of Doriel's function or his budget for the time being.

Note

1. Mahmoud Foroughi, director-general of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

417. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 14 February 1957

Coded Tel. XA518; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Kidron reports on a talk he held with Hammarskjöld, on instructions from the prime minister, regarding the resumption of Fedaiyun operations originating in Sinai.[1] The fact that the Fedaiyun infiltrate through UNEF lines indicates to him that Egypt has not abandoned its policy of aggression against Israel and that UNEF is not an effective measure of preventing such incursions. He submitted to the secretary-general a list of all such incidents as of 30 January.

The secretary-general replied that he will telegraph the list to UNEF commanders and request their comments. In response to the remark about Egyptian policy he said that perhaps these incursions may be described as retaliatory actions. Kidron protested, and the secretary-general was embarrassed and apologised. As for UNEF — obviously he never believed that UNEF or any other military force would be able to prevent such infiltration completely so long as there is no other arrangement in place.

Note

1. At that time Tekoah sent to the Israel missions abroad details on the renewed deployment of the Fedaiyun in Sinai:
"A large number of Fedaiyun arrived in Egypt from the Strip. A unit comprised of such Fedaiyun is currently in training in a special camp in Egypt. At the same time, Fedaiyun activity is being organised anew in El-Arish. Together with the arrival in the city of the Egyptian border guard (an integral part of the army), several intelligence personnel arrived there, among them persons known to have operated Fedaiyun from Sinai in the past. An intelligence office was opened, whose function is to renew operations against Israel. The concentration of Fedaiyun in El-Arish includes both Egyptian and

Palestinian Fedaiyun. It is known that some of the Fedaiyun arriving there were recently located in Jordan after escaping from the Gaza Strip. This reorganisation applies to several hundred Fedaiyun" (see Tekoah to the Israel missions abroad, Circ. Tel. 819, 15 February 1957, 130.09/2377/5).

418. Meeting: D. Ben-Gurion — E. Lawson (Tel Aviv, 14 February 1957)[1]

Report: 130.02/2459/11

Summary

Ben-Gurion described his views as "his personal opinion" since the government had not yet finalised its position.[2]

1) He welcomes the generally positive approach demonstrated in the aide mémoire of the State Department.[3] But there is still need for clarification of several essential details regarding both the Gulf and Gaza.
2) **Aqaba**. He welcomes the establishment of the Gulf of Aqaba as an international waterway, and connecting this issue with Egypt's 1950 statement.[3] He welcomes the announcement that American ships will sail in the Gulf. The worrying question is, what happens if UNEF leaves the Gulf before peace with Egypt is achieved, and then the blockade is renewed. Moreover, there is no explicit U.S. assurance of Israeli freedom of passage, and Israel remembers well its experience with the Suez Canal.
3) **The Armistice Agreement**. Israel will not return to it, since for eight years Egypt did not consider the agreement as a situation which contradicts war or precludes Fedaiyun operations or a blockade. However, Israel is willing to announce that it does not claim rights of belligerency and will abstain from any acts of hostility against Egypt on the basis of reciprocity.
4) **Gaza**. The article in the aide mémoire by which the U.N. will solve the future of the Strip paves the way for the possibility of discussions between Israel and the United States to find an agreed solution to be brought to the U.N. for ratification. The prime minister mentioned the three problems inherent in Gaza: security, economic development for the local residents and a solution to the refugee problem. He added that Israel is willing to contribute its share by also resettling some of the refugees within the framework of a comprehensive U.N. solution. Israel is not insisting that the United States accept the proposals that have already been submitted to it on this matter, but requests an in-depth discussion while looking into the situation, in order to try and reach an agreed solution.

The ambassador called the prime minister's attention to the following points:

1) The generally positive tone of the aide mémoire.
2) The United States wishes to help and to announce this wish in public.
3) The recognition that Gaza was a source of trouble.
4) Dulles' statement that he would not have made his announcement lightly unless he had reached the conclusion that the problem can indeed be solved.
5) His statement that he will be under a serious moral obligation should Israel withdraw and the blockade be renewed.
6) Stressing the international nature of the Gulf and mentioning Egypt's statement of 1950.
7) The announcement that the United States will exercise freedom of passage and will act to achieve international recognition of that right.
8) The announcement that after the withdrawal the United States will take measures to carry out the proposals raised by the secretary-general. This is a general statement and does not mean that the United States will insist that this or that particular proposal be acted upon, but it nonetheless signals a marked change in approach.

Notes

1. The talk was summarised by Herzog. Compare Lawson's report on the talk with Ben-Gurion: *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no.100, pp. 170–173.
2. Before the beginning of the government meeting on 14 February, Lawson told Ben-Gurion that he had received further clarifications from the State Department and requested a meeting to deliver them. Ben-Gurion met with him at noon, during the break between the first and the second part of the meeting, which took all day. See no. 419.
3. No. 404.
4. See no. 268, note 2.

419. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to G. Meir and A. Eban (New York). 14 February 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA109; Inc.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

After the government had reached its decisions,[1] the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sends Meir and Eban guidelines for an aide mémoire to be presented to Dulles:

1) The government of Israel is most appreciative of the interest shown by the president and the secretary of state in Israel's problems and their willingness to get involved in the matter.[2]

2) The Gulf of Aqaba. Israel welcomes the positive attitude of the United States on the issue of the Gulf and agrees in principle with its approach. It wishes to note with satisfaction the statement concerning the nature of the Gulf as an international waterway offering free passage to ships of all countries, including Israel, and the reference to Egypt's commitment to the United States; the statement concerning the intention to make use of American rights of navigation in the Gulf together with the cooperation of other countries in this process; the statement by the secretary about the moral responsibility which the United States will assume should the blockade be renewed after Israel's withdrawal; the proposal that a U.N. force will be stationed in Sharm el-Sheikh.

   However Israel wishes to point out the threat to Israel's freedom of navigation in the Gulf if it is returned to Egypt before peace is achieved. Here the Egyptian blockade of the Suez Canal in violation of the Constantinople Convention should be mentioned, together with the 1951 Security Council resolution, and the failure to take any steps against Egypt for this violation. The government of Israel proposes that a U.N. force will therefore be deployed along the coast of the Gulf to ensure freedom of passage, or an agreed navigation arrangement should be established, or alternatively, Israel should be given effective assurances for its freedom of navigation.

3) Gaza. The government of Israel is aware that the future of the Strip is to be worked out through the efforts and good offices of the U.N., and has taken note also of Dulles' comment that the United States has not yet determined its final position on the question. Israel wishes to comment that the Strip never was Egyptian territory, and was used by Egypt only as a base from which to launch attacks on Israel, in contravention of the U.N. Charter and Security Council resolutions. Israel should not be required to reinstate the status quo in Gaza, nor should Egypt be allowed to return to the Strip.

   There are three problems involved with the Gaza Strip: Israel's security, and especially the safety of the settlements in the South and in the Negev, the economic status of the permanent residents and the problem of the Gaza refugees. The government is prepared to invest maximum efforts to resolve the last two problems.

4) The armistice agreement. Since Egypt, through its repeated violations over the years, has destroyed the value of the armistice agreement, Israel cannot be expected to return to the status quo. However, Israel proclaims that it does not demand for itself belligerent rights with regard to Egypt, and undertakes to refrain from any act of hostility against Egypt, on the basis of a reciprocal undertaking.

5) In view of the constructive and positive approach exemplified in the talk with the secretary and in the aide mémoire, and in the belief that the United States and Israel both aspire to bring peace to the region, the Israeli government would

like to hold wide-ranging talks in the near future between representatives of the U.S. and of the Israeli government, for the purpose of further clarifications.

Notes

1. Ben-Gurion convened the government for a special meeting on 14 February in order to discuss the U.S. proposals (see stenographic record of the government meeting, 14 February 1957, in file 77.0/9/33; see also no. 426).
2. See no. 403.
3. Nos. 403 and 404.
4. No. 414.
5. In this telegram Eban was told that he may change the order of the items and the style in the response sent to the United States, but if he has any reservations regarding the content, he must seek prior approval from the prime minister before making any change (see Herzog to Eban, TNWA 110, 14 February 1957, 93.01/2185/10).

420. J. Tsur (Paris) to S.Z. Shragai. 14 February 1957

Copy: 93.02/205/15

Summary

Tsur informs Shragai that following the consultation on the subject of immigration from Morocco which took place in Paris, it has been decided that a representative of the World Jewish Congress should go to Rabat to renew negotiations on immigration, although chances of success are currently slim.

The aim should be to obtain the consent of the government of Morocco to the establishment of an agency that would assist those planning to emigrate to Israel, in accordance with the principle held by Israel of supported immigration for individuals.

He knows that the World Jewish Congress would prefer not to be involved in this endeavour, but at present he does not see any other suitable candidates, and they should be pressured, via Nahum Goldmann, not to shirk this duty. He had also spoken with Goldmann himself, who had objected to the renewal of negotiations in the first place out of concern that it would lead to an increase in immigration. It was explained to him that there is no such expectation, and he was persuaded of the need to arrange the mission.

Note

1. Chaim Shoshkes, active in HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), which was founded in New York in 1909. He carried out missions for this organisation in several countries.

421. Aide Mémoire from the Government of Israel to the Department of State.[1] 15 February 1957

Notes

1. Eban composed the aide mémoire on the basis of the guidelines sent to him after the government meeting. See no. 419.
2. See no. 404.
3. See no. 403.
4. See no. 268, note 2.
5. See Editorial Note no. 376.
6. Charles Cheney Hyde, an American jurist and expert on international law who served on the International Court of Justice in The Hague in 1951–1952. The reference here is to his book *International Law, Chiefly as Interpreted and Applied by the United States,* published in 1945.

422. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 15 February 1957

Coded Tel. W227; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Shiloah reports on the Dulles-Eban talk, at which Herter, Phleger, Rountree, Wilcox, Wilkins and himself were present. The talk focused on the Israeli government's aide mémoire.[1]

Eban explained that the aide mémoire is intended to review Israel's position and indicate paths for a quick solution to the issues under debate. The question of the Gulf of Aqaba is a crucial one for Israel, and any legal formulation reached may be instrumental in determining its future. The definition of UNEF's functions and length of stay is also of paramount significance. According to Israel's assessment, Nasser will renew the blockade after the IDF's withdrawal and cause UNEF's evacuation from the Gulf, unless the functions and duration of the force's stay are clearly defined.

Next, Eban expounded on Israel's position on the issue of the Strip. Israel is adamant in its resolve to prevent re-entry of the Egyptians. He concluded with a procedural proposal with regard to the Gulf: an agreed American declaration, agreement on UNEF's functions, the withdrawal of the IDF, the entry of UNEF. With regard to Gaza: the withdrawal of the IDF and a visit by a U.N. delegation to the region to review the problems of civilian administration and of the refugees.

Dulles said he had read the aide mémoire with disappointment and was afraid that the Israeli government failed to grasp the nature of the American initiative.

Israel had not complied with the General Assembly's resolution on withdrawal, and the United States was under the impression that if Israel knew the U.S. position regarding the two issues raised by the prime minister in his note to the president, this would make it easier for it to carry out the U.N. resolution. As a member of the U.N., the United States can pull its weight; as a maritime power, it can enact a certain policy with regard to the Gulf, and it is willing to make public statements in that regard. However, the United States does not have the authority to act instead of the secretary-general of the U.N. or to negotiate on behalf of the General Assembly, nor can it force its will on the U.N.

Dulles went on to describe the imminent crisis in U.S.-Israel relations. The United States considers itself to be a friend of Israel, but there is a limit to what it can do. He pleads with Israel to comply with its request. Israel must keep in mind that the United States has offered it far-reaching assurances. It must further keep in mind that there is a very strong common interest between the United States, Israel and other powers. Freedom of navigation through the Straits and in the Gulf is vital for the development of a transportation route that would offer an alternative to the Suez Canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

The ambassador commented that due to the importance of this alternative route, no effort should be spared in preventing Nasser from impeding freedom of navigation, which is so essential to Israel. Such an impediment would be bound to bring about a renewal of hostilities. To this Dulles retorted that in such a case Israel will not find itself alone in the battle. Eban replied that Israel has the benefit of experience from the blockade in the Suez Canal, when the world did not lift a finger to come to its aid. Dulles admitted that the powers did not realise that it was in their own best interests to ensure Israel's freedom of navigation in the Canal. Today the situation has changed, and the world is aware of the importance of the Gulf, the Straits, and the new transport route.

At the conclusion of the talk Dulles noted that the tension and pressure at the General Assembly are growing. If an understanding is not reached very soon, the debate will be joined with full force in the Assembly. Immediately after the meeting he is leaving for another consultation with the president. Eban said that he would consult with the minister of foreign affairs and report to the government, and he may then request another meeting.

Note

1. No. 421.

423. M. Sherman (New York) to L. Eshkol. 15 February 1957

Copy: 130.23/309/1

Summary

Sherman makes a number of proposals for projects to be submitted by Israel to the President's Fund.[1] He believes that Israel stands a chance of being granted between 10–25 million dollars from this fund.

In his opinion it is advisable to meet with Richards, the president's special envoy, in the United States, before the latter leaves for the Middle East, and present him with several requests for an allocation from the President's Fund to cover Israel's extra expenditure on fuel and expenditure related to immigration. He should be told that donations from the UJA can cover only part of the latter expenditure and shown foreign currency figures proving that Israel is in great need of the above allocation.

Sherman presents Eban's view that it would be best not to speak to Richards only about economic plans, since the motive for the president's plan was mainly a security one. Therefore it would be advisable to discuss security-related plans with him, even if no funds will be allocated for them this year — for example, the Eilat-Mediterranean road, the fuel reserves or Haifa port.

Notes

1. The aide mémoire was not found. The reference is to U.S. funding for the Eisenhower Doctrine on the Middle East. No immediate allocation was necessary for the initial funding, since the intention was to use the remaining balance of 200 million dollars of the sum budgeted for fiscal year 1956–1957 ending on 30 June. See Editorial Note no. 275.
2. On 15 February the embassy of the United States in Israel notified the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the forthcoming visit of Richards to the Middle East, but did not state a date (the notification is in file 130.23/3088/3).

424. J. Tsur (Paris) to L. Eshkol and M. Bartur. 15 February 1957

Coded Tel. 671; Inc.: 130.09/2347/4

Summary

Tsur approached Mollet's bureau chief and requested to bring to the prime minister's attention the delays on the matter of the loan, which has already received approval at government level.[1] He pointed out the importance of a swift and clear response to Israel's political struggle and expressed his surprise at the evasions by Finance Ministry officials, either from giving an answer or from continued discussions with him. He asked for the prime minister's personal intervention. The bureau chief promised to act at once.

Tsur also spoke to Joxe on the same subject, and the latter promised to make contact with Mollet's bureau. Joxe was fully briefed on the dangers threatening Israel as a result of the discontinuation of American aid. He said he entirely justifies any aid that can be given at this time, and will do what he can to that end.[2]

Notes

1. See no. 357, note 1.
2. In a symposium on France-Israel relations which took place in Israel on 14 February, Pierre Gilbert, the French ambassador, said: "We want and are able to help you. Unfortunately we do not have too many dollars, but we can give you credit which would enable you to purchase from France everything you would be getting from America. We also wish to help you with the equipment necessary for the passageway [the pipeline] between the Mediterranean and Eilat, which would benefit all of Europe as an excellent substitute to the Suez Canal. This is an important and urgent plan" (*Haaretz*, 15 February 1957).

425. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 16 February 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA309; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Eban sums up the situation in the United States.

1) Following the irate reactions of the Arabs and Hammarskjöld, Dulles has decided that his offer to Israel represents the maximum that he is willing to

do, except for amendments and clarifications to the declaration that the United States is willing to make on the basis of the 11 February aide mémoire.[1]

2) He will most probably receive the president's approval for this line of action.
3) The press, as well as Israel's friends, seem to think that Israel is going too far. Their assumption is that if the United States determines that the Gulf of Aqaba will be open, and if it establishes free navigation as a fact and the stationing of UNEF, then all the above, combined with Israel's deterrent power, would ensure free passage. As for Gaza, world public opinion has always espoused an international solution.
4) The assumption is that Dulles will make his proposal on a "take it or leave it" basis. If Israel fails to accept it, the United States will drop the initiative and pass it on to the United Nations.
5) The only way out left by Dulles is the offer to Eban of the option of proposing amendments and improvements in the aide mémoire, which will be formulated as a declaration of American policy.[3] After consultation with the minister of foreign affairs, such amendments would be proposed on the basis of Israel's position as described in the aide mémoire.[5] The main amendment would refer to U.S. recognition not only of its right to freedom of navigation but also its duty to protect that right for all other nations, including Israel. As for Gaza, the amendments would establish the withdrawal of the IDF, while leaving all other issues until the situation can be clarified with the U.N. delegation which is to be dispatched for this purpose.

Eban suggests that for the moment Israel should refrain from any reaction.

Notes

1. No additional telegram from Eban was found concerning the developments on 15 February. Ben-Gurion, in his address to the government meeting of 17 February, referred to this telegram as "Eban's evaluation" (see stenographic record of the government meeting, 17 February 1957, in file 77.0/9/33).
2. No. 422.
3. No. 404.
4. No. 422.
5. No. 421.

426. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 16 February 1957

Coded Tel. TNW115; Outg.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Ben-Gurion responds to Eban's two telegrams — the talk with Dulles[1] and the summary of the situation.[2] It seems to him that the matter will be returned to the General Assembly, and he does not expect any favourable developments to ensue. However, in his opinion Israel must not back down from two points:

1) Israel must not evacuate the Gulf without effective guarantees of freedom of navigation.
2) Under no circumstances may Egypt be allowed to return to Gaza.

He raised these points also in the government meeting on 14 February. He added that the Israeli people are willing to risk sanctions for the sake of these two principles. He knows that public opinion in the world does not support Israel on the issue of Gaza, but still it is possible to explain Israel's stance and try to persuade people. If Israel does not succeed in doing so and has to choose between satisfying public opinion and its security, it will choose security. In his opinion, the facts of the situation — the presence of the IDF on the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba — have contributed to the shift in America's position as reflected in the aide mémoire[3] submitted to Eban.

Ben-Gurion sees several points, both positive and negative, in the American proposal.

On the positive side there is a change from the secretary-general's formalistic approach and there is willingness to hold discussions with Israel prior to a withdrawal.

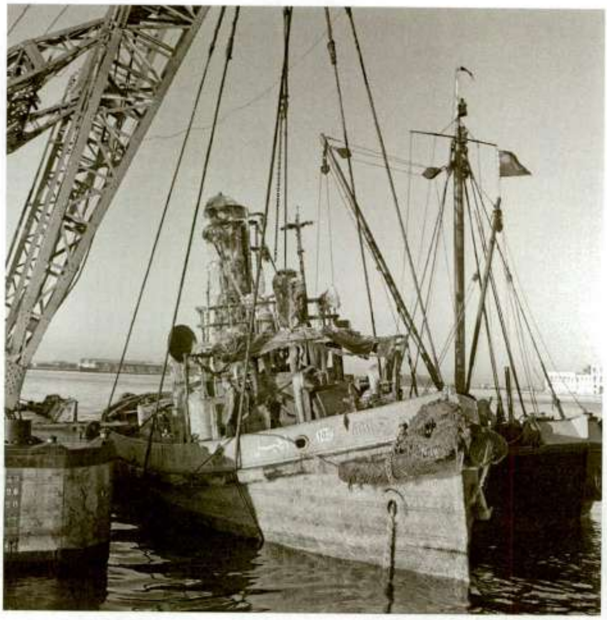
It also includes a clear-cut statement by a superpower that the Gulf is an international waterway. Israel will not have to prove that point in the International Court of Justice; the burden of proof will be on Nasser to show that it is *not* an international route.

The United States pledges to send its ships through the Gulf and to call on other countries to do the same. It stands to reason that if it indeed does so, Britain will follow suit, probably as will France, and perhaps a few other countries.

The United States is publishing a pledge made to it by Egypt some seven years ago, according to which the Straits are an international waterway and navigation through them will be free according to international custom and the principles of international law. This publication is of great value in shaping world public opinion.



The Israeli frigate *Mivtach* at Sharm el-Sheikh, 3 January 1957. Government Press Office



Clearance operations in the Suez Canal, 1 January 1957.
UN Photo



Israeli soldiers near gun from the Egyptian shore battery at Ras Nasrani, at the entrance to the straits of Tiran, 10 January 1957. Government Press Office



Yigal Allon speaking at a demonstration against U.N. policy and against withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Sharm el-Sheikh, February 1957.
Associated Press, Israel State Archives



Evacuation of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip, 7 March 1957. Israel State Archives



Evacuation of Israeli forces from Sharm el-Sheikh,
8 March 1957, Israel State Archives



Entry of the Finnish battalion of UNEF to Sharm el-Sheikh on its evacuation by IDF troops, 8 March 1957, Israel State Archives



Laying the oil pipeline from Eilat to Beer Sheba, 3 March 1957. Photographer: Moshe Pridan, Government Press Office



The oil pipeline becomes operational with the arrival of the U.S. tanker *Kern Hills* from Iran, 7 April 1957. Israel State Archives



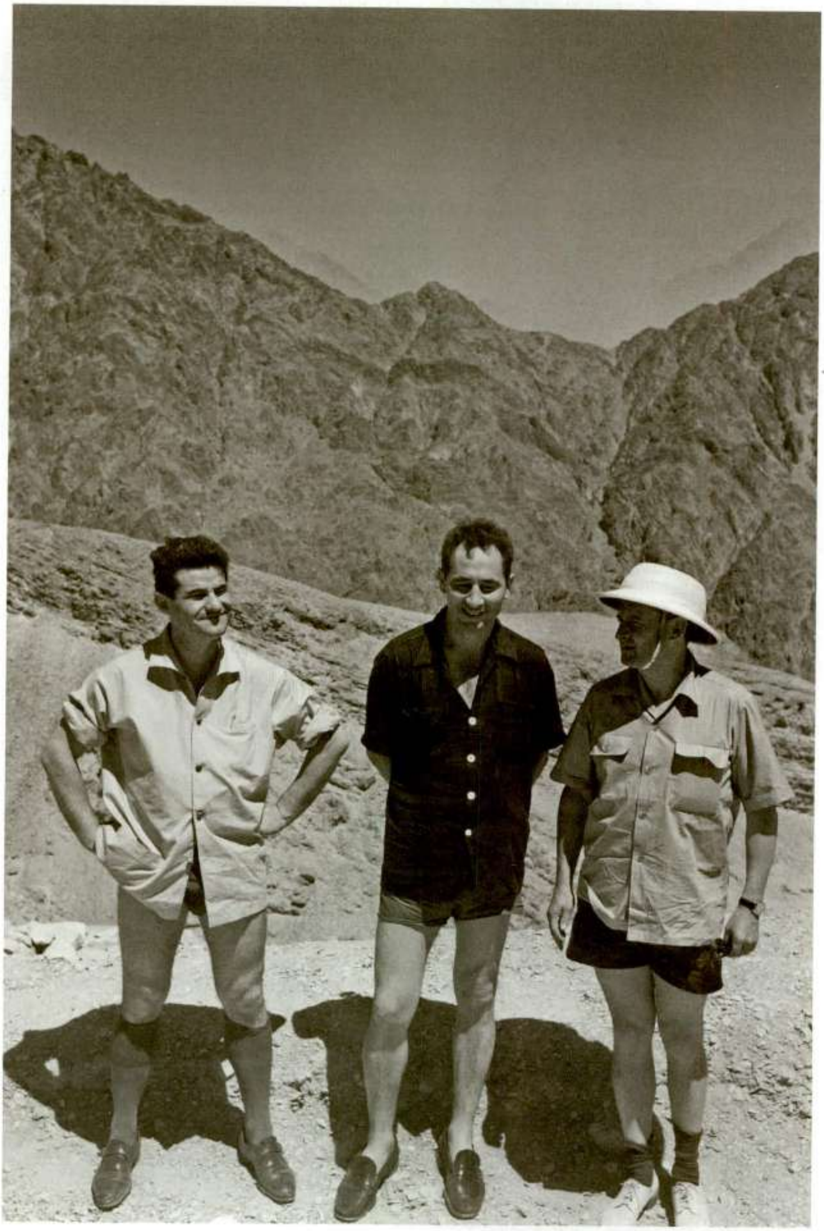
(Left to right) U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, Lieutenant-General Raymond Wheeler, U.N. Under-Secretary Ralph Bunche and the commander of UNEF, Major-General Eedson Burns observe operations to clear the Suez Canal, 25 March 1957. UN Photo



Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in conversation with U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, 1959. Photographer: Moshe Pridan, Government Press Office



Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in conversation with the American special envoy to the Middle East, James Richards, 3 May 1957. Associated Press, Israel State Archives



The director-general of the Ministry of Defence, Shimon Peres, with former French Minister of Defence and Prime Minister Maurice Bourgès-Maunory and former director-general of the Ministry of Defence, Abel Thomas, on a visit to Eilat, 1 June 1958. Photographer: Yaron Mirlin, Government Press Office



French Foreign Minister Christian Pineau (in centre) in conversation at the U.N. General Assembly with Sir Leslie Munro, president of the Twelfth Session of the assembly (left) and Guillaume Georges-Picot, the French representative to the U.N. (right). 18 November 1957. UN Photo



Canadian Minister of External Affairs Lester Pearson, president of the Seventh Session of the U.N. General Assembly, opening a meeting, 14 October 1952. UN Photo

An opportunity is opening up for oil tankers to come to Eilat, and perhaps also a chance of receiving international aid in building an oil pipeline from Eilat to Haifa. All these enhance Eilat's prospects of becoming a regional port of international significance. Therefore Ben-Gurion has consistently seen the Straits and the Gulf as being of more importance to Israel's future than the Gaza Strip.

On the negative side:

The aide mémoire specifically makes Israeli freedom of navigation through the Gulf dependent on a retreat to the armistice demarcation line. As long as Israel does not leave Gaza and does not allow Egypt to return, it forfeits its right to freedom of navigation through the Gulf.

There is no guarantee of freedom of navigation for Israel, neither on the part of the U.N. nor on the part of the United States, even if Israel does retreat to the armistice demarcation line. This is precisely what happened in the Suez Canal, even though Israel's rights had been explicitly recognised both by the Constantinople Convention and by the Security Council resolution.

The stationing of a U.N. force does not prevent the return of Egypt to the Gulf, and upon their return they will hamper the passage of Israeli ships.

With regard to Gaza, it says that the future of the Strip will be determined by the U.N. But the negative aspects outweigh the positive: the aide mémoire states that the Gaza Strip is occupied territory and is the responsibility of Egypt, therefore Israel must leave and Egypt has the right to return. This is in effect a return to the status quo ante. Ben-Gurion therefore proposes [...][5] (the proposals which were approved by the Cabinet and sent to Eban).[6]

In his opinion, Dulles' reply bars the way to an agreement. Israel must therefore condemn in the Assembly the double standard practiced against it, as well as Egypt's announcement that it will not permit Israeli passage either through the Suez Canal or through the Gulf and that it intends to renew Fedaiyun operations. Israel will declare that its very existence and security demand that its withdrawal from the Gulf take place only after receiving effective guarantees of freedom of navigation and an administration in the Gaza Strip in cooperation with local residents and the U.N. It will not budge from this position even if threatened by and punished with sanctions.

Notes

1. No. 422.
2. No. 425.
3. No. 419.
4. No. 404.
5. The deletion is in the original.
6. See no. 300, note 4.

427. R. Shiloah (New York) to J. Herzog. 17 February 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA310; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Shiloah summarises the second talk with Dulles on 16 February, after his return from consultations with the president in Georgia.[1] In addition to the secretary of state and Eban, Phleger, Wilcox, Rountree and Shiloah were also present. Eban said that he had sent a detailed account of the first talk to the government. There had been no time to receive any reaction from Israel, but he did manage to consult with the minister of foreign affairs in New York. He and the minister repeat once again that there is no discrepancy of purpose between the two countries.

Israel is very pleased that the United States has recognised the justice of its claims and sees eye to eye with it concerning freedom of navigation and the future of the Gaza Strip being considered by a U.N. delegation. Therefore Israel is puzzled as to why the United States sees its response as a rejection of its proposal and is considering returning the discussion to the General Assembly. Israel believes that they should continue their bilateral discussions and strive towards an agreement.

Dulles noted that thanks to U.S. efforts, the discussion at the Assembly was deferred,[3] yet there is growing pressure by the Asian-Arab bloc to convene the Assembly and a call for a discussion of the proposal for sanctions on Israel. Dulles doubts whether it is in the power of the United States to achieve further postponement of the discussion, particularly if it is not convinced that there is a chance for progress in the bilateral negotiations.

Eban claimed that discussions should be continued and presented three paths towards a solution:

1) A resolution by the General Assembly on stationing UNEF in the Gulf until an acceptable arrangement is made for freedom of navigation for Israel.
2) If this is not possible, an unequivocal pledge by the United States and other maritime powers to ensure that no impediments are made to free navigation.
3) A public pledge made by Egypt, in the General Assembly, renouncing the policy of belligerency, blockades and siege.

If none of the above is possible, then Israel's government must act under the assumption that its withdrawal will be followed by a blockade and by war.

The secretary replied that both he and the president understand the extent of Israel's concern, and are not trying to delude it into believing that its fears might not be realised. The United States cannot promise to provide the assurances demanded by Israel. The president cannot overstep his authority. A binding international guarantee involves the approval of both the House of Representatives and the

Senate, something which is out of the question at present. In the United Nations, too, present conditions preclude achieving more than was achieved in the 2 February resolution; nor is it possible to define UNEF functions to suit Israel's wishes.

Despite everything, the United States is demanding from Israel, on the strength of the friendship between the two nations, to accept its proposal and to cooperate with it. The president and the secretary are convinced that, even if the path they propose does not achieve its goal, the expected results will nonetheless be favourable to Israel.

Eban replied that the government of Israel has discussed the proposal very seriously. On the other hand he described Israel's experience with the U.N. and the danger to its security should it rely on the U.N. in its current composition. The question is what the United States will do if Israel's fears materialise and Egyptian belligerency is resumed.

Dulles said he has reached the conclusion that forceful action will have to be taken against any renewed aggression. The United States is well aware of the magnitude of the responsibility placed upon it should belligerency be renewed after Israeli withdrawal. He is willing to promise, in the name of the president and the Administration, to act in close cooperation in order to ensure the success of the proposed policy.

Eban responded with an appreciation of the show of friendship, yet stressed that, despite all its good intentions, the United States may, from international considerations, demand that Israel refrain from military reaction to renewed Egyptian aggression. In the light of past experience, Israel is reluctant to rely on a promise which does not carry with it clear guarantees. Dulles replied that the United States knows that by its demand of Israel it is undertaking a huge moral responsibility; yet it still sees it as a duty to beg it to accept.

Eban replied that he will relay the full contents of this conversation to the prime minister. He added that the government may wish to invite him in order to hear what he had to say in greater detail; but should the General Assembly convene and start discussing sanctions, it would hinder continued American-Israeli discussion in an appropriate atmosphere. He requested that the discussion in the Assembly be postponed for as long as possible.

Notes

1. Dulles had gone to Thomasville, Georgia to confer with President Eisenhower in his vacation resort. Lodge also took part in the meeting.
2. The meeting was held on 16 February.
3. The discussion in the General Assembly was set for 18 February, and following the U.S. request it was postponed to 21 February and later for an additional 24 hours.

428. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the Prime Minister and J. Herzog. 17 February 1957

Coded Tel. WNT260; Inc.: 93.02/2185

Summary

Shiloah summarises the third talk between Dulles and Eban, also attended by Phleger, Wilcox, Rountree and Shiloah. The ambassador gave the prime minister's response to the Dulles plan[1] and his conclusion that the plan does not guarantee freedom of navigation and will not prevent the renewal of Egyptian belligerency. The talk took place in a crisis atmosphere.

Eban went on to provide critical commentary on various sections in the U.S. proposal, and the secretary remarked that these comments are interesting but worthless, since the Israel government has already decided not to accept the offer.

Eban pointed out that the lack of distinction between military evacuation and withdrawal of the civil administration in Gaza is the source of the deadlock on these issues, since Israel is in fact willing to evacuate its military forces. Also, making freedom of navigation contingent upon evacuation of the Strip nullifies the promise of free navigation, because Israel will not accept the return of Egypt to the Strip. Dulles asked whether Israel would accept the plan were the two issues to be separated, and Eban replied that he was not authorised to overstep the instructions he was given, but naturally it would change the nature of the debate. He mentioned the possibility that the minister of foreign affairs would travel with him to Israel in order to take part in government discussions, and the need for the United States to apply its leverage to postpone the debate in the General Assembly. Dulles retorted that he did not believe it possible to delay the debate any further. He added that Israel surely knows that the Secretariat of the United Nations is discussing the plan for Gaza and that he is not authorised to discuss this subject with Israel on behalf of the United Nations.

He went on to say that he is sorry and disheartened about Israel's reaction. He is afraid that it faces great trouble. His feeling is that a serious opportunity for cooperation is being missed here, and that they seem to be entering a period fraught with obstacles that will damage relations between the two governments and the two nations. The Soviets are bound to take advantage of this opportunity to increase their penetration of the Middle East on the pretext of protecting the U.N.'s authority. He fears that the way chosen by Israel will bring about a renewal of the war, finding Israel in an international situation that cannot be justified.

Note

1. No. 426.

429. G. Meir (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 17 February 1957

Coded Tel. XA523; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

The minister of foreign affairs has no doubt that Israel is currently at a very difficult juncture. The American proposal contains enough positive points to delude many people, yet does not include the pledge that Israel needs concerning the Gulf or an arrangement for Gaza. The talks between Eban and the secretary indicate that the United States considers settling the matter to be of vital importance to its policy and may therefore take drastic steps against Israel. The president himself telephoned a well-known Jewish figure and asked him to put together a delegation of Jewish dignitaries to meet with Dulles for the purpose of hearing from him that the United States has done everything in its power,[1] hinting that the consequences for Israel could be serious.

Meir expressed her opinion that Israel should not withdraw on the basis of the Dulles proposals, especially not under pressure of the debate in the General Assembly. She is not sure that the United States will be willing to get into a conflict with Nasser or with King Saud on account of Israel when the latter's freedom of navigation is interfered with. Israel should demand continued negotiations. Already there are voices in the press saying that though the United States has made substantial offers, Israel still has the right to demand clearer statements and there is no reason to rush things. Meir suggests sending a personal note to the president, with the hope that his reply may contain something clearer; if not — this still may buy some more time in which to advocate Israel's stance.

In her view, the United States needs Israel to withdraw, inter alia because of the negotiations it wishes to conduct about the Canal. It is obvious that there is no intention to ensure Israel's rights there. She had heard a hint in that respect from Pineau when he was in New York. Eban is leaving for Israel forthwith[2] and she too is willing to come if the Assembly does not convene and if Ben-Gurion deems it necessary. In her opinion, a final decision should be delayed until Ben-Gurion hears what Eban has to say. Though she does not agree with the latter, she thinks he ought to be heard.

Notes

1. On 15 February, Eisenhower called Bernard Balaban, the president of Paramount Pictures, a well-known industrialist and businessman who was a friend of the president and trusted by the White House, and asked him to put together the delegation. The invitees, including Balaban, the president of Bnai Brith, Philip Klutznik, and the oil magnate and the honorary president of the American Jewish Committee, Jacob Blaustein, could not refuse the president's personal request; however they did ask that they too would be allowed to state their opinion in the meeting with Dulles.
The delegation invited to the meeting included eight American-Jewish leaders: Balaban, Klutznik and Blaustein; Sam Leidersdorf, the treasurer of the United Jewish Appeal in New York; Lou Novins, Balaban's advisor and public relations officer; Irving Engel, one of the leaders of the American Jewish Committee; William Rosenwald, chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, and Mendel Zilberberg, one of the heads of the Jewish community in Los Angeles. There was concern that the discussion would be used to pressure the non-Zionists in the delegation to exert pressure on Israel and that an attempt would be made to break up the united Jewish front. Therefore the foreign minister and Shiloah briefed the invitees in advance (see Shiloah to Herzog, NWTA314, 22 February 1957, 93.01/2186/3).
The meeting took place on 21 February but did not serve the president's aim since it did not bring about pressure by U.S. Jewry on Israel (see *The Political Battle*, pp. 240–241) but rather had the reverse effect, strengthening their solidarity with Israel. On 22 February the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations convened and decided to dispatch a letter in the name of the Conference to the president and Dulles, requesting them to continue their negotiations with Israel, to send more letters on behalf of each organization separately, to inundate the president, Dulles and Senate members, with telegrams from all over the United States and to organise a mass rally in Madison Square Garden and other mass rallies throughout the country.
They also discussed the meeting of the Jewish leaders with Dulles, and in order to remove any doubt, Klutznik was asked to find the best way to bring home to the Administration the united front of U.S. Jewry in support of Israel (see Comay to the United States division, NWT315, 22 February 1957, 130.02/2459/12).
2. See no. 431.
3. In an extraordinary government meeting on 18 February it was decided to summon Eban for a special consultation in Israel. It was also decided to summon the minister of foreign affairs, if it became clear that the U.N. General Assembly would not convene during her absence from the United States. See stenographic record of the government meeting, 18 February 1957, in file 77.0/9/33.

430. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 17 February 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA311; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Eban replies to Ben-Gurion's comments on the Dulles proposal[1] and presses for a compromise with the United States along the following lines:

1) Accepting the American proposal of freedom of navigation, after final attempts at amendment, as a sufficient basis for the evacuation of Sharm el-Sheikh.
2) An agreement on the withdrawal of military forces from Gaza, and the dispatch of a U.N. delegation to look into all other problems, particularly the relations between the U.N. and the existing civilian administration, without determining anything else at this stage except for a clear understanding that Egypt will not return.

Eban elaborates on his arguments for accepting the proposal, and claims it would be a mistake to assume that if Israel remains in Sharm el-Sheikh, this will guarantee it freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. On the contrary, he claims, it would bring about international tension, a major conflict with the United States and others who support Israel on the issue of navigation and a clash with the U.N. and the Afro-Asian bloc. Above all, Israel's staying there will inevitably cause the renewal of hostilities.

The U.S. proposal does not guarantee freedom of navigation either, but it can serve as a basis on which to build combined elements that provide a real chance for turning the vision of Eilat into reality. The bottom line is that the chances of developing the Gulf for trade, for the transport of oil and a bridge between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean are close to nil if Israel remains in Sharm el-Sheikh, but very high within the framework of the American proposal.

The value of the position at Sharm el-Sheikh was tactical and was aimed to force someone to come up with a different plan. It was successful thus far because it helped drive home the idea of the importance of Eilat and made the United States establish the international nature of the Gulf. But now it should be considered whether its usefulness has not been worn out and whether the time has not come to change tack in favour of freedom of navigation and relations with the United States.

In Eban's opinion, an agreement with the United States on freedom of navigation will be of no use to Israel so long as the United States makes this right dependent upon a solution to the Gaza issue which does not ensure non-return of Egypt. Therefore, Israel must obtain the consent of the United States to the second item as

a precondition for Israel's acceptance of the first. A debate in the General Assembly will not get the two sides to move beyond the stalemate.

Eban knows that Ben-Gurion appreciates full well how essential Israel-U.S. relations are to Israel's security and development. Israel is currently at a crossroads. A refusal guarantees a serious and superfluous crisis, since Israel and the United States are not opposed in their objectives. An agreement guarantees a productive period and a stronger relationship.

Note

1. No. 426.

431. E. Najar (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Israel Embassy in Paris. 17 February 1957

Coded Tel. NPTA64; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Najar summarises a talk between the minister of foreign affairs, Pineau, Eban and himself.

The Israelis reviewed the situation for Pineau. He read the document presented to Dulles and approved of its content. He does not think there is a danger of sanctions. In any case, he feels certain that Italy, Germany, Belgium and France would not comply and that the General Assembly's recommendation on the topic will not go through.

On the issue of Suez, he reported that Nasser had only said that French and British ships could sail freely in the Canal, but did not mention Israel. The Israelis concluded from the above that at this stage no thought had been given to Israel's rights.

It was agreed that Pineau would instruct Alphand, the French ambassador to the United States, to tell the State Department in no uncertain terms that the European states will not agree to sanctions even if a resolution to that effect is adopted by the General Assembly. Pineau would meet with Spaak in Paris to organise a wide Western front on that issue. Pineau will also relay appropriate instructions to the French mission to the United Nations to support Israel.

Mollet will arrive in the United States on 25 February. Najar believes that it is of the utmost importance that Mollet receive a precise Israeli briefing before leaving Paris, since it is not certain that the foreign minister will be able to meet with him before his talks with Eisenhower.

Note

1. The uprising in Algeria was brought up for discussion at the U.N. General Assembly at the beginning of February despite the objections of France, which denied the U.N.'s authority to discuss "a French domestic affair." The Afro-Asian bloc submitted to the political committee a proposal to grant Algeria the right to self-determination, and, after this proposal was rejected, on 15 February the Assembly accepted a compromise proposal expressing the hope that a peaceful solution would be found for the conflict, in line with U.N. principles and the Charter.

432. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan. 17 February 1957

Original: 130.23/3120/23

Summary

Tsur summarises his talk with the secretary-general of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Joxe, who, in the former's opinion, is the most outspoken and friendly towards Israel compared to all his predecessors. Joxe truly believes in Franco-Israeli cooperation and strongly objects to the policy of illusions with respect to the Arab countries practiced by his predecessors.

Tsur complained that no progress has been made on the oil pipeline plan, and about the foot-dragging on the issue of credit promised to Israel,[2] caused by delays and indecision at the administrative level, which has apparently not yet assimilated the French government's attitude towards Israel.

Joxe replied that on the matter of the pipeline Tsur was mistaken in his evaluation. There had been a government decision and Pineau even discussed it explicitly in his talk with Hammarskjöld.[3] It is true that the Economic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reservations about it, but that is of no importance since that department will carry out whatever it is told to do. The main source of opposition was Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Ramadier, and he is the one who must be convinced. As for the credit, Joxe would do his utmost to expedite negotiations.

Joxe believes in enhancing ties with Israel. For France, this is the only logical policy in the Middle East; he sees no anchors in the region other than Israel and Turkey, due to their military value and stability, and Lebanon, due to its Christian elements.

Joxe went on to a general discussion of relations with the administrative staff in general and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in particular. In the context of military campaigns, it is only natural that any negotiations be conducted directly between the government and military bodies responsible for these campaigns. However, it is a

mistake to continue this mode of communication even when the emergency is over and when the matters at hand are to do with economic and political cooperation. Ultimately, the execution of policies rests with the administrative staff, which may delay and even cancel any initiative out of lack of goodwill or out of resentment for being kept at arm's length.

The assumption that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is hostile to Israel is also a dangerous one. The top echelons of the Ministry are all on Israel's side. He knows that in the past there have been serious difficulties with the administrative staff, but times have changed. The proponents of the Arab policy have been through a serious crisis and are now searching for a new policy. Tsur remarked that among Foreign Ministry officials there are still some who cling to the earlier policy and oppose any rapprochement with Israel. Joxe did not deny that, but said that these were mainly ex-ambassadors to Arab countries. Policy, however, is determined at the top, and Israel should speak to top officials frankly and openly and share its concerns and plans with them, since the more they do so, the easier it will become to remove obstacles from the consistent policy of cooperation between the two countries. The same is true for relations with other ministries.

Notes

1. See no. 403.
2. See no. 357, note 1.
3. See no. 379, note 3.
4. Jules Moch, a member of the leadership of the French Socialist Party. Moch visited Israel in late February to investigate the possibility of investments by French companies, especially in the oil pipeline, as part of the economic cooperation between the two countries.

433. Note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Soviet Embassy. 17 February 1957

Copy: 93.39/449/7

Summary

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs states in reply to a Note from the Soviet embassy dated 6 February 1957: [1]

The government of Israel has noted the fact that the Soviet Union explains the unilateral annullment of the contracts to supply Soviet fuel to Israel on political grounds.

This attitude of the Soviet Union, especially towards a small nation, is in contradiction to the numerous Soviet declarations condemning the imposition of politically-motivated restrictions on international trade and condemning embargo. It also raises doubts as to the possibility of maintaining proper trade relations with Soviet government companies, as it is clear that their undertakings are of a binding nature only as long as they are in line with the political needs of the Soviet Union.

The government of Israel takes note that in the aforementioned Note the Soviet government in effect takes responsibility for breach of the contracts signed by Soviet companies, and it accordingly reserves its right to take action in consideration of the damage caused to the State of Israel and its citizens by the breach of the said contracts.

Note

1. See no. 385.

434. Editorial Note

Statement by President Eisenhower (17 February 1957)

After the third meeting with Dulles and Eban ended in deadlock and after further consultations between Eisenhower and Dulles, the president decided to take a personal initiative in order to pressure Israel to abandon its opposition to the proposals made by the United States. In addition, the president's concern that too much tolerance towards Israel would make Arab countries resentful of the United States and would seal the fate of his doctrine for the Middle East spurred him to take direct action. Ben-Gurion thought that the impetus for this statement was Eisenhower's promise to King Saud to bring about the evacuation of Israeli forces from Sharm el-Sheikh and the Gaza Strip (see Editorial Note no. 366).

On 17 February, concurrently with the publication of the State Department's aide mémoire to Israel of 11 February, Eisenhower issued a presidential statement saying that the United States recognised the fact that Israel has legitimate claims against Egypt and that a way must be found to satisfy them. The second resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly on 2 February created, in his opinion, an opportunity for just such a solution, an opportunity further strengthened by the proposals made in the State Department's aide mémoire. The United States has made a note of Israel's views on the Gaza Strip and the Gulf of Aqaba and has made it clear that after the withdrawal of Israeli forces it would take measures to solve the issues troubling Israel. The aide mémoire reflects U.S. intentions, both as

a member of the United Nations and as a maritime power with its own rights. The United States believes that the step taken by the United Nations in its resolution of 2 February, the declarations of the member states, and the American aide mémoire — all these combined provide Israel with "the maximum assurances it can reasonably expect at this juncture or that can be reconciled with fairness to others."

Therefore the United States is renewing its request to Israel to withdraw in accordance with the repeated demands of the United Nations, and to rely on the efforts of the friends of justice to bring the Middle East to a state conforming to the principles of justice and international law, which will serve the proper interests of all the inhabitants of the region. In such a way Israel will be safer than if the occupation continues, contrary to the judgement of most of the world.

Britain and France, both of which had conquered parts of Egypt during the Israeli attack on Egypt in October, have already withdrawn without any conditions, in response to the same U.N. resolution which also called for the withdrawal of Israel. They accepted the verdict of the U.N. that the solution to the difficulties between them and Egypt can be found only after withdrawal, without making the solution a prerequisite for the withdrawal. The United States believes that Israel must follow suit. The United States, for its part, will strive to remain true to the United Nations and support its endeavours to uphold the aims and principles of the U.N. Charter, wherein lie the world's hope for peace (see *The Political Battle*, pp. 220–221).

The response to the president's statement arrived from Jerusalem on the following day. After an urgent government meeting, in which approval was given once again to Ben-Gurion's proposals for resolving the differences between Israel and the United States, Ambassador Lawson was summoned to Jerusalem to see the prime minister, who explained Israel's response and tried to bridge the gap between the two countries' positions on the points crucial to Israel (no. 437). For this purpose Ben-Gurion also dispatched an urgent message to Dulles via the ambassador (no. 436).

In response to the publication of the American aide mémoire by the State Department, Israel published its own aide mémoire (no. 421), and the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement which explained that the American proposal did not address the main issues — the assurance of freedom of navigation after the withdrawal of Israel's forces from the western shores of the Gulf of Aqaba and preventing the Gaza Strip from again becoming a base for Fedaiyun attacks on Israel (see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Israel missions abroad, Circ. Tel. 832, 18 February, 130.02/2377/5).

435. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 18 February 1957

Coded Tel. AX525; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Kidron reviews the situation in the General Assembly on the subject of sanctions.[1]

1) The Afro-Asians have not yet determined the final agreed version of their draft proposal.
2) The Soviets informed Egypt that for reasons of principle they cannot support the imposition of sanctions by the Assembly. Egypt demanded that the Soviets change their mind, and Kuznetsov[2] undertook to ask for new instructions. The Soviets then submitted their own draft proposal, which asks the General Assembly to recommend to the Security Council to impose sanctions on Israel. The wording of this proposal is very similar to the American version that fell through in the Security Council on 30 October. This step annoyed Egypt even more, since the Soviet proposal stands no chance of being approved by the Assembly, and even if it did, it would encounter a French veto in the Security Council.
3) The British proposed to the Americans, as a possible way out of the difficulty, that the next resolution on withdrawal include a sentence to the effect that after the completion of Israel's withdrawal, the Assembly proclaims that the state of belligerency between the parties has come to an end.

Notes

1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs calculated the numbers of expected aye and nay votes at the General Assembly on the issue of imposing sanctions on Israel: 15 countries promised to vote against; 12 promised to abstain; 31 would undoubtedly vote in favour and another 10 countries would probably do so. It was clear that only if the United States actively intervened in the processes of the Assembly would these numbers change. If it approved sanctions there would be fewer countries against them, and if it opposed sanctions there might not be a two-thirds majority necessary for passing the resolution (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 16 February 1957).
2. Vasili Kuznetsov, first deputy minister for foreign affairs of the Soviet Union.

436. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 18 February 1957

Coded Tel. TNW129; Outg.: 130.02/2459/15

Note

1. Compare *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 111, p. 200.

437. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 18 February 1957

Coded Tel. TNW131; Outg.: 130.02/2459/3

Summary

The United States division reports on Lawson's meeting with the prime minister. Hamilton and Herzog were also present. The prime minister raised the following points:

1) On the issue of the Gulf of Aqaba, Israel and the United States see eye to eye in matters of principle, and discussions should be continued with the aim of finding an answer to Israel's concerns about the possible renewal of the blockade.
2) Gaza: Israel has no interest in annexing it and wishes only to ensure its own safety. He also mentioned the problem of the local residents and the refugees, and Israel's willingness to contribute to the solution. On this issue, too, there is reason for continued discussions. From Eban's recent talk with Dulles[1] he was under the impression that perhaps a distinction could be made between the two issues.
3) He is convinced that the difference in their opinions is so small that in a discussion with a U.N. committee of neutral states it would be possible to reach an agreement within a few weeks. He sees no reason why the United States should reject such a request, since if it wishes to exercise navigation rights in the Gulf of Aqaba it can do so just as easily a few weeks later should an agreement not be reached.
4) It would be a grave error to ignore Israel's request and decide hastily on sanctions. Public opinion in the United States and worldwide will not be happy with a discriminatory approach, and an international reckoning will ensue.

Notes

1. No. 428.
2. See Lawson's report on the talk in *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no.113, pp. 203–204.

438. M. Fischer: Summary of a Report on his Mission to the Vatican (15 January–9 February 1957). 18 February 1957

Orig.: 130.23/3102/18

Summary

Fischer reports on his mission to the Vatican which had a double objective. The immediate and urgent aim was to present Israel's view on current political issues, particularly the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip, and to try and ensure that the Vatican provides positive instructions to its representatives in various countries. The long-term objective was to make some first steps towards a rapprochement with the Vatican, which might eventually lead to recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Fischer held meetings with the heads of the Vatican Secretariat of State and with members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Vatican. Summarising his report, he presents his conclusions:

It seems that the Vatican's attitude towards Israel is no longer based on predetermined principles. Initially the basic attitude was negative, and the idea of a Jewish state was accepted by the Vatican chiefly because it involved the creation of an international area in Jerusalem and its environs. The non-execution of this plan made the Vatican hesitate on whether it should accept the principle of the existence of a Jewish state.

However, after the Sinai Campaign, it would seem that the Vatican no longer has any doubts about the existence of the Jewish state. Within the framework of the doctrine of "protecting the West," which is the central idea in the Vatican's foreign policy, the state of Israel must appear as the central element of this defence on the Middle East front. Only thanks to Israel is there any hope of rescuing the Christian elements in the region, which display only passive resistance to the forces of destruction.

Difficulties are expected to arise because of the issue of the holy places and the status of the Catholic institutions in Israel and their operation. Nonetheless, Fischer believes that progress is possible, though it may be slow and difficult. In his opinion, the activity should be aimed at communicating Israel's views to the leadership of

the Vatican, and mainly the Secretariat of State. To this end, contact should be made with Catholic representatives in all spheres: nuncios, priests, leaders and members of Parliament belonging to Catholic parties, institutions (universities), intellectuals (writers) and journalists. It would also be helpful to try and enlist the active help of personages having influence on the Vatican, such as Adenauer.

Notes

1. See also Fischer's report on his first talks at the Vatican, Fischer to the West European division, 17 January 1957, 130.23/3102/18.
2. Pope Pius XII.
3. The document is in file 93.02/294/19.
4. *Ibid.*
5. The document was not found.
6. Raffaele Cantoni, an economist and public figure, active in the Zionist Federation in Italy. Formerly president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities.
7. An agreement signed in 1929 between the government of Italy and the pope, which formalised relations between them. The agreement granted the pope full sovereignty over the area of the Vatican in Rome.

439. E. Elath to the British Commonwealth Division. 18 February 1957

Coded Tel. Outg.: 93.04/331/8

Summary

Elath reports on Shek's talk with Hadow on the matter of the British arms that fell into Jordanian hands after the evacuation of their base in Zarqa. Hadow did not attach too much importance to this issue and requested that Israel not blow it out of proportion, since no good would come of a public squabble between Britain and Israel over a few guns.

Shek claimed that the way to dispel the tension between the two countries was to cancel the embargo on the sale of arms to Israel, and fulfill the promise made by Lloyd to Elath about the supply of arms. Hadow replied that the matter was under discussion, but their hands were tied by the U.N. resolution, and they were concerned about Soviet arms supply to the Middle East. Shek replied that the Soviet Union is already breaching U.N. resolutions by supplying arms to Arab countries. He added that it would be possible to find a way to supply the arms without publicity and everything is open to negotiation.

Notes

1. At the beginning of the Sinai Campaign, the Jordanians helped themselves to millions of pounds sterling's worth of equipment from the British stores in the Zarqa base, some of which was weapons and ammunition (see conversation with Westlake, first secretary in the British embassy in Israel, 20 February 1957, 93.04/329/2).
   In a discussion in the British parliament on 18 February, the minister of state at the Foreign Office, Ormsby-Gore, undertook that after the evacuation of British forces from Jordan following the annullment of the agreement between Britain and Jordan, any arms and ammunition remaining in the stores would be distributed according to the principles of the Tripartite Declaration of 1950.
2. See no. 282.
3. See Editorial Note no. 11.

440. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 19 February 1957

Coded Tel. XA530; Inc.: 130.02/2459/3

Summary

Eban met with Arthur Dean[1] in an attempt to clarify some points in his talk with Dulles in the hope of making the latter's proposals more flexible. Dean spoke to Dulles and then conveyed his answers:

The president had made it clear that he would be willing to accept amendments or interpretations of the U.S. aide mémoire which do not contradict its import, but only on the assumption that if he accepts them, Israel and the United States will arrive at a final agreement.

With regard to Aqaba, Dulles said that he is fully aware that once UNEF enters the Gulf it will stay there for a long time, until a fait accompli is established — the recognition of Aqaba as an international waterway and freedom of navigation for all.

Hammarskjöld too is planning the stationing of UNEF in order to prevent interference with free passage and to prevent the danger of a blockade. Dulles believes that the U.S. declaration is a historical turning point in the annals of the Gulf. The United States took that step not only for the benefit of Israel but for the benefit of all countries needing an alternative transportation route, so as to break the monopoly of the Suez Canal.

As for Gaza, the secretary is willing to consider a version that would allow for the withdrawal of Israel's forces, and replacement of the military government at the next stage, after a review by a U.N. committee.

In any letter to be written by Eisenhower he will not be able to commit himself openly to military action, since that would require Senate approval. Dean proposed a

version based on Eban's proposals: the president would pledge that if, after Israel's withdrawal and despite the U.S. declaration and all ensuing measures, the Gulf is not open to all, he will see it as a debt of honour to bring his full weight to bear on the United Nations and ask the organisation to use its power to put an end to the disruption immediately.

Notes

1. See also report on the meeting in *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 112, pp. 201–203.
2. See no. 404.

441. Z. Argaman (Washington) to A. Eban (New York) and J. Herzog. 19 February 1957

Coded Tel. 235; Inc.: 130.02/2459/12

Summary

Argaman summarises a discussion held by the embassy personnel on Dulles' proposal, and presents their considerations and conclusions:

1) The sympathy and understanding of both American and world public opinion, which Israel enjoyed and which have justified its stay in Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh have reached their peak. The president's announcement[2] and the wide publicity given it have created the impression that the United States has done its utmost to assist Israel. It will be well-nigh impossible to enlist public opinion should the U.S. proposal be rejected.
2) Continuing to keep forces in Gaza and in Sharm el-Sheikh in contravention of the views of the United Nations, the United States and possibly other friendly nations as well will not ensure Israel's security nor its freedom of navigation, even if no sanctions are imposed. Israel must not ignore the possibility that Egypt may counter-attack with extensive Fedaiyun operations which will be difficult to check without resorting to serious retaliatory action.
3) Even though Dulles' proposal does not include guaranteees, and despite the risk it entails, it nonetheless contains some serious positive elements, which the prime minister also pointed out and which open the door to extensive cooperation with the United States. It is not merely a statement of policy but a serious moral obligation which the U.S. Administration may be called upon to uphold.
4) In contrast to the Gulf issue, the solution proposed for Gaza is not acceptable to Israel. But in order to demonstrate Israel's wish to comply with the U.S.

proposal and to contribute to finding a solution, the feeling is that perhaps Israel should announce forthwith its intent to evacuate Sharm el-Sheikh, while maintaining the right to ensure freedom of navigation — by force if necessary — and its willingness to continue negotiations on the terms for evacuating Gaza.

Such a declaration would break the stalemate, calm public opinion and demonstrate Israel's good will. It will force the United States to continue negotiations and postpone the debate in the General Assembly for the time being.

Notes

1. No. 404.
2. See Editorial Note no. 434.
3. See no. 428.

442. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan and the West European Division. 19 February 1957

Coded Tel. 690; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on his talk with Daridan[1] and Sebilleau.[2] He told them about the prime minister's proposal in the latter's message to Dulles for appointing a U.N. review committee for Gaza.[3] They were favourably inclined towards the idea and expressed their opinion that the matter should be "dragged out" until 10 March, the date on which Egypt must declare its policy on ships navigating the Suez Canal. If Nasser is obdurate, U.N. and U.S. pressure can be brought to bear on Egypt instead of being focused on Israel alone.

Daridan warned, however, against abusing the leeway given to Israel. Tsur asked whether there was indeed U.S. pressure on France to influence Israel. Daridan vehemently denied such an allegation and claimed he is referring to a tactical move aimed at preventing any further exacerbation of relations with the United States, so that it does not lend its voice to the resolution on sanctions. Despite Daridan's denial, Tsur assumes that France was approached by the United States.

Tsur proposed that France announce that if the United States provides assurances for the freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, it will do so too. His proposal was rejected by the French because of Dulles' hesitations. He then raised an alternative idea: to propose to the Western heads of state to issue a joint declaration on participation in the guarantees. This proposal found favour with the French, but

they expressed concern that the relevant ministers would be too busy to discuss it. If they are given a few more days, they may be able to obtain such a declaration, perhaps with the participation of the Scandinavian countries too.

Notes

1. Jean-Henri Daridan, director-general for political and economic affairs, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
2. Pierre Sebilleau, in charge of the Africa-Levant division in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3. See no. 436.
4. No. 443.
5. The proposal was included in an aide mémoire submitted by the Israeli government to the United States, see no. 421.
6. The European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), established by the Treaty of Rome on 25 March 1957.

443. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan and the West European Division. 19 February 1957

Coded Tel. 691; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on his talk with Blankenhorn.[1]

1) Adenauer received a message from his ambassador in Washington, who was summoned to the State Department in order to ask Adenauer to exert his influence on Israel and persuade it to agree to the arrangement proposed by the United States. He was told that the president knows that Adenauer has Ben-Gurion's ear and would therefore much appreciate such a step on his part. Adenauer replied that the matter has nothing to do with the Federal Republic of Germany and he does not think he can intervene. He further told Blankenhorn that he justifies Israel's stance and thinks it should continue to resist the pressures upon it.
2) At Blankenhorn's suggestion, Adenauer instructed their embassy in Washington to convey to the State Department that should the United Nations decide to impose sanctions on Israel, West Germany will not join the resolution, since the reparations agreement does not come under ordinary trade relations but is rather a political-moral pact which it has undertaken and will fulfil under all circumstances.

3) Tsur mentioned the idea of Western European countries joining the United States and participating in the guarantee the latter intends to give for freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. Blankenhorn liked the idea. He will try to bring Adenauer to a meeting with Mollet, Spaak and others to discuss the subject.
4) Judging by his cautious inquiries about the pipeline, Tsur concludes that there is some interest in West Germany and a real possibility of their contribution to its funding should the proposal be raised by the French. Naturally, the crisis in the Middle East would have to be over first.
5) Blankenhorn is pessimistic about the possibility of establishing diplomatic ties in the next few months, in light of the tense situation in the Middle East. West Germany is not eager to take any initiative that might stir things up in the United Nations and in the Arab world. As a result counter-influences have become stronger, despite Adenauer's positive attitude. He suggested several temporary measures that would not constitute the establishing of relations, for instance: sending a committee with the ostensible function of studying how the reparations agreement is being put into practice on the spot and the chances of future trade relations. Such a committee could be temporary, unlike the trade mission which has been discussed.[2] The main thing is that it be headed by a person of influence, such as Prof. Boehm.[3] If this idea is acceptable to Israel, it ought to be proposed to the Bonn government by Shinnar.

Notes

1. Herbert Blankenhorn, ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to NATO.
2. For further details about the proposal for a German trade mission, see Vol. 11, no. 150.
3. Franz Böehm, head of the delegation of the Federal Republic of Germany during the negotiations on the reparations agreement.

444. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Bucharest. 19 February 1957

Coded Tel. 368; Outg.: 130.23/3123/16

Summary

The East European division informs the Israel legation in Bucharest that they have complained to Chitic[1] about the following:
1) The delay in authorising the arrival of the minister, Harel.[2]

2) The following of and spying on the Israeli employees in Bucharest, which interferes with their regular legal activities and which is in contradiction of the Romanians' repeatedly expressed desire for proper and normal relations.
3) The freeze imposed on the reunion of families.[3] Despite the many promises, the government of Romania ignores this humanitarian problem. This inflexible attitude can no longer be ignored and causes growing discontent both in Israel and abroad. Israel wishes to call the government of Romania's attention to the severity of the situation, and hopes for a quick and thorough change.

Notes

1. Gheorghe Chitic, counsellor and chargé d'affaires in the Romanian legation in Israel.
2. Arieh Harel presented his credentials as Israel's minister to Romania in April 1957. At that time there were some 3,000 applications pending in Romania for the reunion of families. A telegram sent by the Israel legation in Bucharest to the East European division stated: "As of November 1956, the regular reunion of families has almost come to a halt, excluding prisoners of Zion; even in cases of husband and wife. The suffering is indescribable. I see no logic in not having contact with the authorities on this matter, and I propose to request a meeting with the director of the department, in which I shall state our demands and our protest over the hold up of these cases which are of a purely humanitarian nature, while stressing our satisfaction with the handling of the exodus of prisoners of Zion. Whatever our response — we cannot relinquish our demands and pressure" (Tel. 714, 12 February 1957, 130.09/229724).
3. As of 1953 immigration from Romania had all but come to an end and over four years only 1,800 immigrants arrived in Israel.

445. K. Katz (Warsaw) to the East European Division. 19 February 1957

Coded Tel. 165; Inc.: 130.09/2306/12

Summary

In response to a telegram from the division,[1] Katz states that the facts about mass immigration from Poland[2] can no longer be kept quiet, but the wording of the publicity should be carefully controlled. It should be stressed that after the abolition of Stalinism, the reunion of families, which was arbitrarily stopped seven years ago, once again became feasible. However people leaving Poland, where private property was abolished, leave penniless. Immigration must not be used as proof that Poland is antisemitic. Jews leave because they want to go to the Jewish State and live as Jews. They also fear that reactionary and antisemitic elements may again succeed in putting a stop to reunion of families.

In his opinion, no mention should be made of the repatriation of people from the Soviet Union to Poland who then continue on to Israel.

Notes

1. In this telegram and in another (442) of the same date it was stated that despite the publication of an article in *The New York Times* about the mass exodus of Jews from Poland, the subject should not be included in the official propaganda of the UJA and the Israel Bonds. If it is utilised for the fundraising campaign in the United States, it will cause more damage, in addition to that already caused by the publication of the item (see the East European division to the Israel legation in Warsaw, Tels. no. 441, 442, 18 February 1957, 130.09/2306/9).
2. See nos. 274, 313.
3. See also Katz's report on his talk with Sluczanski of the Polish Foreign Ministry, in which the best way to explain the exodus of Jews from Poland was discussed (Katz to the East European division, 21 February 1957, 130.09/2306/12).

446. Editorial Note

President Eisenhower Steps up the Pressure on Israel (20 February 1957)

The announcement made by the president on 17 February 1957 (no. 434) was the first in a series of moves taken by him, which seemed to lead directly to a confrontation with Israel.

The president decided to cut short his holiday in Georgia and return to Washington in order to handle the crisis in the Middle East personally. Immediately upon his return, on 20 February, he convened twenty-six leaders of the two parties in the Senate for a meeting in the White House to discuss whether the United States should support the proposal to impose sanctions on Israel in the United Nations Assembly if Israel remained steadfast in its refusal to evacuate its forces from the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip. The meeting was called against a backdrop of growing opposition in Congress to the position held by the president and Dulles. Dulles' statement in a press conference of 19 February, which implied that the United States had not abandoned the threat of imposing sanctions on Israel, caused much consternation in Congress. Since the Democrats retained their majority in both Houses of Congress even after Eisenhower was elected to his second term of office, the president had to take into account the wishes of the Democratic majority and secure its support for his policy.

However, in the meeting at the White House, which was also attended by Dulles, no consensus was reached. Heading the opposition were Senators Knowland (leader of the Republican minority) and Johnson (leader of the Democratic majority). Knowland proposed that the United States call on the Assembly to impose sanctions

on any country (and not just on Israel) which did not comply with U.N. resolutions. He also threatened to resign from his position in the U.S. mission to the United Nations if sanctions were imposed. Senator Johnson presented to the president the decision of the political committee of the Democratic Party in the Senate to oppose the imposition of sanctions on Israel. Most of the other senators attending the meeting did not accept the president's position and refused to lend it public support.

Eisenhower, disappointed by his failure to enlist the Senate on his behalf, decided to ignore the views of its leaders and to address the nation directly, in a radio and television broadcast. However, before the broadcast he dispatched an urgent message (no. 447) to Ben-Gurion, relayed to the latter by phone, and requested a prompt reply, hoping that the prime minister's reply would enable him to tone down the content of his address. Although the president claimed that his message was sent "in the spirit of the traditional friendship between our countries," its content was harsh and contained an explicit threat that the United States would support a resolution in the United Nations that would "adopt measures which might have far-reaching effects upon Israel's relations throughout the world." Ben-Gurion made do with a technical reply to the president's message, saying that he must delay a decision until receiving Eban's reports and until the government had reached a decision (no. 448.)

Eisenhower's speech which was broadcast that evening (20 February) was even harsher than the message sent to Ben-Gurion. He presented the problem in the Middle East as touching vitally upon the national security of the United States, throwing into the balance his own prestige and that of the United States.

Speaking about the freedom of navigation, Eisenhower said that it should not be assumed that if Israel withdraws, Egypt will prevent Israeli shipping from using the Suez Canal or the Gulf of Aqaba. If, unhappily, Egypt did then violate the Armistice agreement or other international obligations, this should be dealt with firmly by the society of nations. As for Israel's obligations to comply with U.N. resolutions, his words were far more explicit: Israel's insistence on its demand to receive assurances raised a basic question of principle: "Should a country which attacks and occupies foreign territory in the face of U.N. disapproval be allowed to impose conditions on its own withdrawal?"

The president concluded his address by expressing firm support for the United Nations and its role in keeping the peace. He said that the future of the United Nations and peace in the Middle East may now lie in the balance; "the United Nations must not fail." Any failure of the United Nations at this point would only be detrimental to Israel itself. In a threatening tone he added: "I believe that in the interests of peace the United Nations has no choice but to exert pressure upon Israel to comply with the withdrawal resolutions."

In view of the imminent clash with the United States, Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary: "I'm afraid that after this speech there is no room for mutual understanding.

I doubt whether Eisenhower has ever been so active in his presidency on any other matter" (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 21 February 1957).

447. Message from President Eisenhower to Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion. 20 February 1957

Copy: 130.02/2459/3

Notes

1. The original message was given by the State Department to Argaman and passed on by Shiloah to Ben-Gurion by telephone. This copy was then sent by Shiloah to Herzog.
2. No. 404.
3. See no. 436.
4. See Editorial Note no. 446.

448. R. Shiloah to W. Rountree (Washington). 20 February 1957

Copy: 130.02/2448/6

Notes

1. No. 447.
2. In the government meeting of 17 February, Ben-Gurion proposed that he would present Israel's response to Dulles' proposals in a political announcement at the Knesset the next day, so that it could be published before the General Assembly met. The government approved the proposal, but after the General Assembly session was postponed and it was decided to recall Eban to Israel to report directly on the latest developments in Washington, Ben-Gurion decided to delay the announcement in the Knesset.
3. See Editorial Note no. 338.

449. Z. Argaman (Washington) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (New York) and J. Herzog (Jerusalem). 20 February 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA210; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Argaman gives a report (based on a French source) on a consultation held at the initiative of the State Department in Wilcox's office, attended by representatives of Britain, France and Canada. Dulles was there for part of the meeting and reported on the U.S. efforts to find a solution to the problem of the withdrawal of the Israeli forces. He showed understanding for Israel's concerns, but claimed that the United States cannot accommodate it on the issue of assurances. He sees no way out if Israel rejects the U.S. proposal. In this case the matter will be brought back to the United Nations and the issue of sanctions will be raised again. But if the United Nations does not make Israel withdraw its forces, there is a serious danger of military or semi-military action on the part of Egypt, which may be later supported by the Soviet Union.[1] He fears that the United States will ultimately have to support sanctions in order to prevent a war. He asked for suggestions and advice.

The French said they would oppose sanctions and voiced their opinion that the U.S. proposal should be improved in such a way as to make it more palatable to Israel. They proposed the following:

1) To persuade all the maritime nations to declare their willingness to establish the international nature of the Gulf, and use their ships for that purpose;
2) To induce the General Assembly to announce the revocation of belligerency rights, based on the most recent report of the secretary-general;
3) The secretary-general would announce the entry of a U.N. force into Sharm el-Sheikh without predetermining the duration of its stay;
4) To work towards the dispatching of a U.N. delegation to Gaza, and meanwhile to postpone any further discussion of this issue at the Assembly.

Both the British and the Canadians announced that their governments would oppose the imposition of sanctions on Israel.

Note

1. In a telegram to Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir referred to the use made by the United States of this issue as a means of intimidation and pressure: "The Americans are enlisting our friends in the United Nations by intimidating them with the threat of Egyptian military action against us abetted by Russian volunteers, leading to a threat of world war. When speaking to friends, they create an impression as if they had reports to that

effect [...] Do we know of any actual preparations?" (see Meir to Ben-Gurion, XA542, 20 February 1957, 93.01/2185).

450. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (New York). 21 February 1957

Coded Tel. DNA495; Outg.: 93.01/2185/10

Summary

Shiloah delivers his assessment of Eisenhower's address and its repercussions in the United States. Prominent figures in the United States[1,2] think that there is no possibility of any further negotiations with Eisenhower. Israel must decide between accepting or rejecting the American plan. They warn Israel that the president has decided that his own prestige and that of the United States, as well as the survival of the United Nations, are all being put to the supreme test.

Israel cannot rely on manifestations of opposition to Eisenhower's policy in Congress. The president has already demonstrated that when necessary he is prepared to ignore considerations of domestic policy. When he presents the issue to the nation and to Congress as one of American national security, there can hardly be any hope of standing up to him. The future of American Jewry may be jeopardised if it becomes embroiled in a serious conflict with Eisenhower, when the latter is arguing on behalf of U.S. national security and world peace.

The president's tough speech did contain, however, some positive elements, in particular the reiteration of Israel's right to freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal, and his statement that should Egypt violate its international obligations, firm action will be taken against it.

The conclusion reached by these personages is that Israel must accept the plan while making a last ditch effort to improve it as much as possible, and while placing responsibility for the results squarely on the United States.

Shiloah shares their assessment both of the president's frame of mind and of the danger to U.S. Jewry. He believes that if it is possible to ensure the non-return of Egypt to Gaza, then an agreement should be reached within two or three days.

Notes

1. Jacob Blaustein, former president and honorary president of the American Jewish Committee.
2. Mendel Ehrlich, a friend of Arthur Dean, Dulles' former partner.

451. G. Meir (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 21 February 1957

Coded Tel. AX539; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Meir presents to Ben-Gurion a proposed draft for the government decision in response to Dulles' proposals, which should include insistence on the points vital to Israel and an expression of appreciation of the United States for its proposals which contain the groundwork for a settlement. Israel believes that if some more time is allocated to joint discussion, an agreed solution would be found.

In her opinion the decision should include the outline and the main points for a suggested settlement, as formulated by the mission in New York[1] and delivered by Eban to Jerusalem; in particular the non-return of Egypt to Gaza and enhancing the guarantees for freedom of navigation. She believes that there was merit in the president's statement about passage in the Suez Canal.

Note

1. Before leaving New York for consultations in Jerusalem, Eban held a discussion with the Israel mission in New York, on the advice of Meir. In that discussion, the participants formulated the outline of an agreement that would break the deadlock in relations between Israel and the United States. Meir approved the document, and Eban took it with him to present at the government meeting. (The document bears no title but a note in Gideon Rafael's writing reads: "Approved by the minister of foreign affairs, to be taken by Eban for consultation in Israel," 19 February 1957, 130.02/2448/6). The following are its main points:

   Gaza: Evacuation of military forces, demilitarisation of the Strip; entry of a U.N. force (scope, authority and date to be discussed separately); non-return of the Egyptian administration; an interim administration for Gaza, to be prepared by a U.N. inquiry committee that will recommend an arrangement for solving the problems of civil administration.

   Gulf of Aqaba: Evacuation of forces; U.S. recognition of Israel's right to navigation and its right to defend that right should Egypt attempt to renew the blockade; the United States calling upon the other maritime powers to join its definition of the legal status of the Gulf and the right of passage to all, including Israel.

   Stationing a U.N. force whose role and authority will be defined in the spirit of Lodge's definition; the United States and other powers will begin sending their ships to Eilat.

   Israel's declaration on freedom of navigation: Israel, being a coastal power, announces its adherence to the U.S. doctrine of freedom of navigation; Israel states that an attack on Israeli vessels is tantamount to an attack on Israeli territory, and it will therefore exercise its right according to article 51 of the United Nations Charter, pertaining to justified self defence.

Other pledges: A letter from the president to the prime minister regarding the responsibility of the United States should Israel withdraw and its free passage is impeded; support for the development of an alternative to the Suez Canal; Israel's rights within the framework of the Eisenhower Doctrine; a renewed confirmation that the United States will act towards exercising the right to freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal; revocation of the economic limitations imposed on 29 October 1956 and continuation of the programmes which were postponed; an opportunity for an in-depth talk between the prime minister and Eisenhower.

452. Editorial Note

The Prime Minister's Speech in the Knesset: the Government's Political Statement before the Debate at the United Nations General Assembly (21 February 1957)

On 21 February Abba Eban, who had been called home for a special consultation at the height of the crisis in Israel-U.S. relations, arrived in Israel. After a prolonged consultation with Ben-Gurion, Eban took part in the government meeting on that day and gave an account of the most recent developments in Washington. Eban's working assumption was that failure to reach an agreement with the United States and the United Nations would bring upon Israel dangers far more severe than those stemming from the proposed agreement. Therefore he recommended the government to make every effort to reach an agreement with the United States and the United Nations and presented it with the outline and proposals for an agreement formulated by the mission in New York and approved by the foreign minister (no. 451, note 1, see *The Political Battle*, pp. 241–243).

The marathon discussion of the government lasted all day and into the small hours of the night. In the break between the second and the third sessions Ben-Gurion left for the Knesset to inform the members of the decisions taken by the government, which were included in the political speech he made in the plenum.

Eban's recommendations notwithstanding, the government did not change its position as expressed in its decisions of 22 January, and decided on the following:

1) To separate the issues of the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba from the issue of Gaza and reach a settlement on one of them even if the other proves impossible to settle.
2) If Israel is assured of freedom of navigation in the Gulf (by means of stationing a U.N. force there, other governments' assurances, an arrangement with countries along the coast or any other arrangement acceptable to the government), Israel will withdraw from there.

3) Under no circumstances will Egypt be allowed to return to Gaza, either directly or indirectly. The government will welcome a U.N. committee and will discuss the problems of the Gaza Strip (security, rehabilitation of the residents and the refugee issue) with it (see Herzog to the minister of foreign affairs, Tel. 493, 22 February 1957, 130.02/2459/15).

On this point a change in relation to the previous decision was introduced: the section in which Israel demanded that the responsibility for security in Gaza be left in its hands was omitted, while stressing Israel's willingness to find a solution in cooperation with the United Nations and under its authority.

Later in Ben-Gurion's speech he expressed himself firmly in opposition to the U.N.'s attitude towards Israel: "The argument is about an acute moral issue concerning relations among nations: will the United Nations, aided by the United States, practice a double standard, one for tyrannical Egypt and another for democratic Israel? Any attempt to impose upon us a distorted judgment and a system of discrimination will be opposed by Israel without flinching. If the United Nations does not uphold one law and one judgment for all nations, its entire moral basis will be undermined."

In response to the pressure exerted on Israel by Dulles and Eisenhower to accept their proposals, Ben-Gurion said: "We are neither obliged nor permitted to agree with everything the United States does. By objecting to any negative proposal coming from the United States, we detract nothing from our feelings of appreciation and friendship towards the American people, our gratitude for the moral and material help that this nation and its government have extended to us; we will not cease in our efforts to bring before the administration and the people of the United States our truth and our justice. And if the worst comes to pass and various elements in the world should join hands, directly or indirectly, in an evil design plotted against us by the Arab rulers and their allies — we will not bow our heads but rather confront them with the fullest power of our moral strength, and I believe we shall not stand alone."

At the same time, Ben-Gurion left the door open for a possible solution to the conflict with the United States, saying at the conclusion of his speech that the government has decided to make another effort at reaching an understanding with it, and that Ambassador Eban, who was about to return to Washington, carried with him the decisions of the government. He expressed his hope that "the door is not closed to further discussion" (see *Divrei Haknesset* (Knesset Reports), Vol. XXI, 1956–1957, pp. 1136–1138).

At the end of the political debate in the Knesset, which lasted until 25 February, the Knesset decided by a majority of 72 votes against 29 (Herut and the Israel Communist Party) to transfer any further discussions on the matter to the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, in the spirit of the Knesset resolutions of 23 January 1957 (*ibid.*, p. 1188).

453. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the Prime Minister. 21 February 1957

Coded Tel. WIP243; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Shiloah sends Ben-Gurion a message from Bedell Smith which he received after Bedell Smith had held talks with the president and with Dulles. For the text see no. 453 in the Main Volume.

Bedell Smith further asked Shiloah to tell Ben-Gurion that he was invited by the president and the secretary of state to serve as their advisor in this affair. When Eban brings Israel's reply he (Bedell Smith) will take part in the internal discussions about it and will express his views to the president and the secretary. He is totally convinced that the president will abide fully by his commitments, and entreats Ben-Gurion again to make a supreme effort to demonstrate flexibility.[3]

Notes

1. At this stage of the Israel-U.S. crisis, Eisenhower and Dulles made another effort to convince Ben-Gurion to accept the proposals made to Israel. Cabinet Secretary Maxwell Rabb, who was aware of the friendship between Ben-Gurion and Bedell Smith, suggested approaching the latter and enlisting his help in persuading Ben-Gurion.
   On 21 February Bedell Smith was summoned to the White House. He expressed to the president and Dulles his firm support of the need to ensure the existence and security of Israel. Bedell Smith agreed to approach Ben-Gurion only after becoming convinced that the American administration would indeed live up to its pledges to Israel as stated in the aide mémoire of 11 February.
2. See no. 288, note 5.
3. Bedell Smith also met with Eban on the eve of his leaving for Israel and passed on through him his advice to Israel to be more flexible in its position and to accept the U.S. proposals.

454. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division and J. Tsur (Paris). 21 February 1957

Coded Tel. 375; Outg.: 93.01/2215/13

Summary

Elath reports on a talk with the new British prime minister, Macmillan, also attended by Ross. Elath described the background to the problems in the Gulf of Aqaba and in the Gaza Strip, and gave an account of the discussions with the United States, emphasising Israel's wish to reach a solution with the help of the latter and of other friendly states, among them Britain. He elaborated on the common interests of Israel and Britain in the Gulf and on the value of cooperation between them, and concluded with the following requests:

1) that they support Israel's demands for assurances in the Gulf and its proposals concerning the Strip both in Washington and in the United Nations;
2) that they join the maritime states which will guarantee Israel's freedom of navigation in the Gulf together with the United States;
3) that they support Israel's proposal to send a U.N. committee to the Gaza Strip;
4) that they oppose the imposition of sanctions should such a proposal be raised in the General Assembly or in the Security Council.

Macmillan stated his long-standing loyalty to the Zionist cause. He said that he understands Israel's demand for guarantees and that he supports the idea of a committee and agrees that its composition must be impartial. He remarked that there was no difference in principle between the stands held by Israel and Britain on guaranteeing freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba, but he would need to give some thought to the idea of joining the United States and other maritime states in providing assurances for freedom of navigation. The issue of the Gaza Strip, on the other hand, seems to him more complicated.

There is a danger that the Afro-Asian bloc in the Assembly will propose the imposition of sanctions, but he does not think that such a proposal stands a chance of achieving the required majority. Britain will oppose sanctions.

He concluded by saying that Israel must recognise Britain's limited ability to influence the United States. Also, Israel should keep in mind the vital interests that Britain has in several Arab countries, especially in the oil states, interests which it cannot afford to jeopardise by excessive identification with Israel.

Later in the conversation, Elath raised several other topics. He complained about the delay in granting El Al credit for the purchase of Britannia aircraft, and pointed out the serious damage that this sort of sanction may cause to economic relations between the two countries. He also raised the subject of the engines, spare parts and

ammunition for destroyers, and expressed his disappointment with his talks with Lloyd on the subject and the latter's promises[5] that came to nothing. He mentioned the Zarqa affair[6] as an example of the discriminatory policy in the supply of arms to Israel and to the Arabs. Macmillan asked Ross for a report on these issues and promised to look into these complaints with Lloyd.

Finally Elath raised the issue of oil, and asked that Israel be given help in increasing the share of oil allotted to it by the oil companies, by supporting Israel's demands from these companies and from the international bodies handling the distribution of oil among consumer countries. Macmillan promised to look into the matter and to help to the best of his ability.

The general impression which Elath received from his talk with Macmillan was that the latter would like to avoid a situation in which he would have to choose between supporting Israel and the U.S. position. It would be difficult for him to identify with the U.S. position if the latter decides on a policy of sanctions against Israel. Nonetheless, he will do everything he can to ensure a comfortable atmosphere in the relations between Britain and the United States before the Bermuda Conference,[8] where the inclusion of Britain in carrying out a Middle East policy based on the Eisenhower Doctrine will be discussed. There is no doubt also that Macmillan is under constant pressure from the British Foreign Office, which is bent first and foremost on "clearing" Britain, in Arab eyes, of any suspected common interests between itself and Israel.

Notes

1. In preparation for his meeting with Elath, Macmillan received a working paper containing the main points of the positions of Britain, the United States and Israel on the subjects to be discussed. In the section on the British position, it said: a) Israel must withdraw; b) the U.N. must apply the same firmness in handling any problems remaining unresolved after Israel's withdrawal; c) U.N. administration in the Gaza Strip; d) after Israel's withdrawal, the U.N. will bring its full authority to bear in order to ensure freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and UNEF will be stationed in the Straits; e) it would not be right to handle only one aspect of the problem (Israel's withdrawal) without solving the other aspects (freedom of navigation; Fedaiyun incursions from Gaza); f) no voting in favour of sanctions without making sure that the other parts of the problem are being handled (see Notes for the Prime Minister, TNA. PRO. FO/ 371/ 128107, 530202, 20 February 1957).
2. No. 436.
3. *Ibid.* See also Editorial Note no. 452.
4. A British government company for insuring foreign deals.
5. See nos. 282, 326, 439.
6. See no. 439, note 6.
7. Misspelled; the reference is probably to OEEC (Organization for European Economic Cooperation).
8. The British-American summit conference that took place in Bermuda between 21–24 March 1957, attended by Eisenhower, Dulles, Macmillan and Lloyd. Among issues

discussed there the Middle East held an important place; topics discussed included freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and through the Suez Canal, the situation in the Gaza Strip, and the laying of a new oil pipeline (through Turkey) to ensure the supply of oil from the Middle East to Europe. Other issues discussed at the conference were European problems and questions of global strategy, the Cold War and nuclear arms.

A joint declaration published by Eisenhower and Macmillan at the end of the conference stated that all U.N. resolutions regarding the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip based on the U.N. secretary-general's report of 25 January 1957 must be implemented fully and immediately. In addition, it said that the issue of passage through the Suez Canal must be solved in accordance with the six principles approved by the Security Council on 13 October 1956. The United States also decided to join the military committee of the Baghdad Pact (see *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, nos. 237–247, pp. 448–464).

455. E. Sasson (Rome) to W. Eytan. 21 February 1957

Coded Tel. 176; Inc.: 130.09/2358/1

Summary

Sasson reports that the secretary of the Christian Democratic party, Amintore Fanfani, and the mayor of Florence, Professor La Pira, came to see him. Fanfani said that he came with the approval of the prime minister and his party's executive committee.[1] Sasson gives the gist of his message:

1) As a Western, democratic, Mediterranean country that maintains amicable relations with Israel and with the Arab countries, Italy is interested in stability in the Middle East. Fanfani is prepared to do all in his power to contribute to that end.
2) Italy justifies Israel's concern over its security and freedom of navigation, and is prepared to make any effort to help it achieve its goals. However, at the same time Italy sees it as its moral obligation to advise Israel not to put too much strain on its relations with the United States, and especially with the White House, and to have faith in Eisenhower's intention of handling the post-withdrawal issues with all due seriousness.
3) Italy supports Israel's proposal to establish a neutral United Nations committee that would study matters on the spot and try to find the most desirable solutions. Should Italy be invited to take part in such a delegation it will gladly do so.
4) Similarly, Italy will be willing to join the United States and the other Western maritime nations in declaring the Gulf of Aqaba an international waterway and in sending ships there. It will also support the stationing of a U.N. force on the coast of the Gulf.

5) Italy is no less worried than the United States about the penetration of the Soviet Union into the Middle East, and believes it is Israel's duty to assist the West and cooperate in order to uproot the Russians.
6) Italy knows that by approaching the Israeli embassy it is making a political and moral pledge. It wishes to believe that the government of Israel will take this into consideration when the time comes for a making a crucial decision.

Note

1. In response to this telegram, Ilsar surmised that the initiative for the visit to Sasson may have been the Vatican's (see Ilsar to the director of the West European division, 24 February 1957, 93.19/274/1). In his reply, Sasson made clear Fanfani's status and power within the political system in Italy:
"As is well known, Fanfani is not satisfied with his role as secretary of the Christian Democratic party only. First of all, he gets involved in all the government's actions and often dictates to Prime Minister Segni how to act both inside and outside the government. Secondly, he is very close to the president of Italy and is one of a group of Italian statesmen who constantly advise on foreign policy in line with Italy's interests in the Middle East and Asia. Thirdly, he is close to the Vatican and well-known in Rome for his American orientation" (see Sasson to the deputy director of the West European division, 1 March 1957, 93.19/274/1).

456. Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower (Washington). 22 February 1957

Copy: 130.02/2448/6

Notes

1. See no. 447.
2. Shortly before Eban left for the United States, on the morning of 22 February, there was a last minute meeting between him and the prime minister. In that talk Ben-Gurion defined the scope of Eban's authority in the talks the latter was to hold with Dulles, in order to enable a measure of flexibility in the continued negotiations with the United States (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 22 February 1957, see also no. 457).

457. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 22 February 1957

Coded Circ. Tel. 852; Outg.: 130.09/2377/5

Summary

Eytan reports that Eban has left and is on his way to the United States. It is hoped that he will be able to continue negotiations in Washington, in an attempt to obtain clarifications regarding Sharm el-Sheikh and support for appointing a U.N. committee to discuss with Israel issues related to the Gaza Strip, such as security, rehabilitation of the residents and the refugee problem.

The State Department has promised to wait for Eban before finalising the position of the U.S. mission to the United Nations or before any decision is taken by the Assembly, which is about to start its deliberations.

The aim of the prime minister's speech in the Knesset[1] was to present Israel's position to the world before the Assembly is convened, while at the same time leaving the way open for further explorations with the United States.

Note

1. See Editorial Note no. 452.

458. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan and the West European Division. 22 February 1957

Coded Tel. 712; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on a talk with Pineau. He informed him of Israel's position on Gaza and the Gulf, and Pineau accepted it as both sensible and moderate. Tsur also provided him with a brief version of the prime minister's speech.[1] Pineau disclosed that the government of France has several ships ready in Djibouti that will sail through the Gulf once the United States decides to exercise its right to freedom of navigation.

As for the sanctions, he considers the threat quite real. In his opinion, the obstinacy on this topic may be attributed more to Eisenhower than to Dulles. The opposition of American public opinion and of the senators may constitute a serious, though not a decisive, factor. With regard to European countries, he is quite certain

of the positions taken by Denmark, Norway, Benelux, Iceland, perhaps Portugal and probably Italy. Should the question of sanctions be brought before the Security Council, France will undoubtedly veto it. He is not certain whether the same can be said of Britain.

With regard to the pipeline, Tsur presented a copy of an aide mémoire that had been prepared for the talk with Mollet.[3] He emphasised that there is some shift in the British and American stance and that it is undesirable that the matter be taken out of French hands. Pineau confirmed that the main difficulty lies with the total opposition of the minister of finance and economic affairs, Ramadier, and of the French oil company. They still hope that Syria will repair the pipe and that the supply of Iraqi oil will be resumed. Pineau doubts that, but Ramadier must be convinced. Tsur will also meet with Ramadier in order to lay the groundwork for Eshkol's visit.

Tsur mentioned the subject of the loan,[5] and Pineau reminded him of France's dire economic situation. Tsur answered that Israel is aware of the situation and therefore did not ask for a loan in dollars but rather credit that would be fully repaid. He added that he does not mean to pressure the French government but it is inconceivable that Israel should be left on its own in view of the serious threats it faces. Pineau replied that for his own part, he is convinced; he will speak to Mollet and they will make a joint effort. He added that the Middle East will occupy an important place in their talks in Washington.

Notes

1. The paragraph omitted here deals with the debate on the uprising in Algeria at the U.N. Assembly in early February.
2. See Editorial Note no. 452.
3. No. 459.
4. Eshkol arrived in Paris on 21 March. See no. 576, note 1.
5. See no. 357, note 1; no. 424.

459. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the West European Division. 22 February 1957

Coded Tel. 714; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on his talk with Mollet before the latter's trip to Washington.[1] Tsur told him about his conversation with Pineau about the Middle East[2] and Mollet

confirmed that a significant part of the talks in Washington will revolve around that issue. He asked Tsur not to speak to the press and explained that his main wish is to influence the United States to alter its position with regard to Israel. If he reiterates France's position on the eve of his departure, it will do the negotiations no good but might rather place the Americans on the defensive.

Mollet requested to curb public talk of Israel's friendship with France. France is the only one among the powers that is openly at war with the Arabs (in Algeria). Despite that fact it demonstrates its friendship with Israel. However, France does not wish to burn all its bridges with the Arabs.

On the subject of the oil pipeline Mollet said that in the last meeting held by his government he argued with his colleagues in favour of the idea and succeeded in convincing them. A study is now under way on possiblities of funding, but should the matter be made public knowledge, a well-planned attack can be expected from the direction of the French oil company and others. Tsur provided him with an aide mémoire and Mollet promised to look into the possibilities, especially when he is in the United States. He showed interest in the idea of a West European pipeline.

As for the loan,[4] Mollet said that both he and Ramadier are entirely in favour, but hinted at the internal difficulties. He agreed that the matter is indeed becoming urgent in view of the latest developments and the impending threat of sanctions, and promised to get in touch with Ramadier promptly and urge him to action.

Notes

1. Pineau and Mollet departed for Washington to try and restore relations with the United States after the damage caused by the Suez Campaign.
2. No. 458.
3. No further information was found on this matter.
4. See no. 357, note 1; no. 424.

460. Z. Argaman (Washington) to S. Rosenne. 22 February 1957

Copy: 130.06/1951/21

Summary

Argaman approaches Rosenne on the issue of the Soviet Union's cancellation of trade agreements for the sale of oil to Israel and purchase of citrus fruit.[1]

After the Soviet Union has officially announced the cancellation on political grounds, he believes that a claim for the payment of damages should be brought against the Soviet Union without delay. The Soviets can no longer justify the cancellation using the excuse of force majeure.

It is not clear whether the cancellation notice originated with the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, or directly from the companies that signed the contract. But whatever the source, in legal proceedings it will not be possible to deny the political cause for annullment of the contracts. Argaman suggests not to wait any longer for the opinion of experts in Soviet law and to file the claim in Moscow while consulting a local Soviet lawyer.

Note

1. See no. 385.

461. D. Lewin (New York) to the Asian and African Division. 22 February 1957

Copy: 130.23/3093/23

Summary

Lewin summarises the behaviour of the Afro-Asian bloc in the General Assembly.

1) Israel's friends in the bloc did not accept its agreed proposal for condemnation and a threat of sanctions. They did not object to the postponement of the Assembly until an answer had arrived from Israel, nor did they discuss any proposal; this was the maximum that could be expected of them.
2) There is no point in speculating what their stand will be if a sanctions proposal is tabled or there is support for it from outside the bloc. It seems that only the Philippines representative will steadfastly oppose sanctions and four or five others will attempt to abstain. Clearly they will find it most difficult to stand firm if the American line is strongly in favour of sanctions.
3) In January, when the main issue was in what form the bloc would address the Assembly, the Japanese representative served as bloc chairman. They were helped not only by the Philippines but also by the Iranians and the Ceylonese.
4) In the second phase, after the publication of the secretary-general's second report, the Philippines representative played a central role by deciding in Israel's favour and by expressing his objection publicly. Liberia was also of great help. The Japanese and the Thais were moderate but had their doubts. The Ethiopians were not among the most vocal objectors but it seems that they had clear instructions from the emperor. At the final stage Pakistan and India too expressed doubts as to the wording of the sanctions resolution, and India was

not active during the bloc's sessions. However, both were acting according to their own interests in the Kashmir conflict which had broken out at the time.

5) Lewin estimates that a certain group within the bloc is attempting to operate as a caucus and thus determine the bloc's position. This group maintains that so far the bloc has been controlled by the Arabs and the neutral states under India's leadership. Their intent is to see to it that the bloc examines each case carefully on its own merits and avoids all extremism. Only in this way will the bloc be able to sustain its central status and fulfil a constructive role in the future of the United Nations and the world.
6) This development is interesting from Israel's point of view, since if there is any hope to be had from the bloc, it is only by getting closer to this group.

Note

1. See no. 431, note 1.

462. Editorial Note

The Debate at the U.N. General Assembly on Withdrawal, Proposals to Impose Sanctions on Israel (22 February 1957)

After repeated postponements brought about by Israeli pressure and intervention by the United States and other countries, the U.N. General Assembly convened on 22 February. The items on the agenda were a report on the activities of the U.N. force in Sinai, and the secretary-general's report on compliance with the Assembly's resolutions of 2 February.

The threat of sanctions hovering over Israel since the Assembly's session in January, due to its refusal to comply with U.N. resolutions, now become palpable as an Arab-Muslim proposal on the subject was tabled. The proposal was submitted by six countries (Afghanistan, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan and Sudan) while most members of the Afro-Asian bloc refrained from joining this initiative.

In the proposal submitted by the Lebanese representative, Charles Malik, U.N. members were called upon to condemn Israel for non-compliance with the Assembly's resolutions, to withhold from Israel all economic, financial or military aid and services because of this non-compliance and to report to the secretary-general on the execution of this resolution.

The Soviet Union too was involved in the steps leading to putting the subject of sanctions on the agenda at the United Nations. After having told Egypt in early February that it would not be able to support such a motion at the General Assembly, the Soviet Union tabled a proposal of its own on 18 February, requesting

the Assembly to recommend to the Security Council to impose sanctions on Israel. The proposal did not stand a chance, and even if it had been approved by the Assembly it would have been vetoed in the Security Council by France (see *The Political Battle*, pp. 250–252).

The Arab-Muslim proposal did not come up for a vote on 22 February, after the White House spokesman announced that the United States would not decide on its stand on this issue before an additional meeting between Dulles and Eban, on Eban's return from Israel. The continuation of the debate was therefore deferred to 26 February.

At the same time the U.S. mission reported to the United Nations that the United States was preparing a proposal for "moral sanctions" as an alternative to the Arab-Muslim proposal. Such sanctions would mean the recalling of the heads of the American diplomatic mission in Israel. If other U.N. members did the same, they would thus express their displeasure at Israel's stand without going so far as an explicit condemnation.

(GAOR ,11th session, 22 February 1957, pp. 1191–1197. See also Smilan to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel. 386, 23 February 1957, 130.23/3131/15.)

463. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 23 February 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA143; Outg.: 130.02/2459/3

Summary

Herzog delivers the prime minister's response to the secretary-general's report on 22 February.[1] The prime minister suggests that they should publish a response which expresses perplexity at the fact that:

1) Egypt's stand is presented by the secretary-general rather than by the Egyptian mission.[2]
2) There has been no reply from Egypt on the basic question of putting an end to the belligerency; it seems that the secretary-general did not discuss this at all with Egypt.
3) Egypt has suddenly started to express concern about the economic situation of Gaza Strip residents after not having lifted a finger to help them for eight years. Moreover, it impoverished them to such an extent that two-thirds of the population are now living off aid provided by the government of Israel. Israel has embarked on development programmes that will offer a chance of extricating the local residents from their appalling poverty and improving their economic status.

Notes

1. In his report to the General Assembly (see Editorial Note no. 462) in which he criticised Israel for not acting on the Assembly's resolution on withdrawal, Hammarskjöld commended Egypt for the progress in its attitude towards the U.N. force. He believed Egypt's statement that it wished for an orderly and mutually accepted process of transferring the Gaza Strip from Israel's military and civil administration to the sole authority of the force. Such an arrangement would ensure the deployment of a U.N. force along the armistice demarcation line in the Strip and would serve as an effective buffer between Israel's forces and Egypt. The help of the U.N. would be enlisted to put an end to infiltrations and incursions from both sides of the border once and for all. Egypt agreed that the U.N. and its aid organisations would see to "roviding aid to the refugees in the Strip and to advancing the area and its residents economically. The statement made it clear that the U.N. force would operate on Egyptian soil only with the consent of the government of Egypt (GAOR, 11th session, Plenary Meeting, 22 February 1957, pp. 1192–1193).
2. With reference to this announcement by Hammarskjöld, Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary: "He acts as if he was secretary-general of Egypt rather than an emissary of the United Nations, but this is nothing new. He has been acting this way ever since I met him in April 1955" (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 24 February 1957).

464. J. Herzog to R. Shiloah (Washington). 23 February 1957

Coded Tel TNW142; Outg. 130.02/2459/15

Notes

1. In this telegram Shiloah asked Herzog for an urgent reply to the message that Bedell Smith sent to Ben-Gurion through him (see Shiloah to Herzog, Tel. 244, 22 February 1957, 130.02/2459/3; see no. 453).
2. *Ibid.*

465. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division and J. Tsur (Paris). 23 February 1957

Coded Tel. 385; Inc.: 130.02/2459/12

Summary

Elath reports that Ross communicated to him personally that it was decided at a meeting of the British Cabinet to instruct their mission at the General Assembly to

insist on freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. However they were not to use the term "innocent passage" which may weaken navigation rights, since the word "innocent" usually refers to territorial waters and not to the high seas that are open to unrestricted international navigation.

Ross stressed that the American language on this issue is vague. It would be best to amend it so as not to leave the international status of the Gulf of Aqaba in any doubt, and so as to prevent Egypt from taking advantage of the lack of clarity at any point in the future for its own purposes.

In response to Elath's question regarding Gaza, Ross said that there has been no change in their position as defined by Lloyd[1] — support for the internationalisation of the Strip.[2]

On the issue of sanctions he said that it is not likely that they will support the sanctions proposal, but he refused to commit Britain explicitly to vote against it. Elath got the impression that Britain's main concern at the next stage at the Assembly is to avoid a vote on this issue, in order to spare themselves the uncomfortable situation of having to choose between a clash with the Afro-Asian bloc and perhaps the United States too, or a clash with the considerable pressure of public opinion in Britain and in the Commonwealth that opposes sanctions.

In a public meeting Gaitskell[3] announced Labour's opposition to sanctions and demanded a guarantee for Israeli freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and an end of the state of belligerency.

Notes

1. See also no. 479.
2. Lloyd expressed his support of a civil administration in Gaza in response to a query in Parliament on 30 January.
3. Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the opposition Labour party.

466. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 24 February 1957

Coded Tel. TNW145; Outg.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Ben-Gurion instructs Eban, in his forthcoming talk with Dulles, that after presenting the government's position he should elaborate on additional arrangements and measures to ensure freedom of navigation:

1) U.S. ships will sail in the Gulf of Aqaba and trade through Eilat, including bringing oil on a regular basis.
2) The United States will announce publicly that if Egypt interferes with Israeli navigation in the Gulf and through the Straits of Tiran after the withdrawal, the United States recognises Israel's right to self defence, i.e., taking any measures required to safeguard free passage for its ships through the Straits and in the Gulf.
3) It must be made clear that the definition of "free and innocent" also includes warships.
4) In case the United Nations does not reach a resolution on the deployment of U.N. forces on the west coast of the Gulf until peace is achieved, it is recommended that the Assembly decide that a U.N. maritime force operate through the Straits and in the Gulf until that time.
5) The United States will collect statements from as many countries as possible concerning their recognition of the Gulf as an international waterway, their intent to sail their ships through the Gulf, and especially their recognition of item 2) above.
6) An arrangement that comprises all the above five points would be acceptable to the government of Israel, even without the deployment of a U.N. force on the coast of the Gulf, until peace is achieved.

467. J. Tsur (Paris) to L. Eshkol and Z. Dinstein. 24 February 1957

Coded Tel. 719; Inc.: 130.02/2459/12

Summary

Tsur reports that his talk with Ramadier ended in a refusal in practice.

1) **Credit**.[1] Ramadier said that he and his experts had reviewed the list of goods submitted by Israel and arrived at a negative decision. All the goods described are dollar-based; France is currently in a stranglehold and cannot give up any export dollars. He understands Israel's situation and knows how much its political situation is dependent on the supply of goods, but he cannot help.
In response, Tsur brought up the promises made by Mollet and Pineau.[2] After a prolonged argument Ramadier agreed that his aides would renew negotiations and will try to find some commodities that can be offered to Israel without harm to the French economy.
2) **The oil pipeline**. Tsur told Ramadier that he is aware of the latter's reservations concerning the plan for the oil pipeline. He cannot hope to persuade him

otherwise, but suggests that, at the least, a committee be established that would embark on practical negotiations with Israel. Ramadier's response was negative. He is concerned about the fate of Iraqi oil which France hopes to receive once the Syrian pipeline is repaired. Therefore a committee seems premature to him. He also expressed his lack of confidence in a satisfactory arrangement being reached in the Gulf of Aqaba, and some fear about the safety of the pipeline once it is built in Israel.

3) He will be pleased to see Eshkol when the latter comes to Paris.

Tsur sums up by saying that past experience has shown that on vital issues Israel initially encounters a refusal but ultimately achieves its goal.

Notes

1. See no. 357, note 1; no. 424.
2, See nos. 458, 459.

468. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 25 February 1957

Coded Tel.: NWT320; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Notes

1. See no. 277.
2. See no. 462, note 1.
3. No. 469.

469. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 25 February 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA321; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Kidron summarises Eban's second meeting with the secretary-general: the essentials of the first meeting with him[1] also apply to the second, though there were marked changes in tone and emphasis on the issue of preventing the return of Egypt to the Gaza Strip, thanks to Dulles' personal intervention. In the first meeting the secretary-general insisted on Egypt's legal rights according to the armistice agreement, and refused to discuss any practical measures that would prevent it from returning to the Strip. Nor did he abandon this legal stand in the second meeting; however he

did beg Israel to advise him on how to prevent such a return. He was told that that is precisely the crux of the problem, and he asked that the issue be left open.

At the end of the second meeting Hammarskjöld said:

1) It is impossible to keep putting off the discussion at the General Assembly; the Assembly has the right to know what is going on.
2) The problem of reporting to the Assembly places him in an uncomfortable situation. He asked whether Israel would object to the publication of the aide mémoire on Egypt's rights in the Strip.

Eban and Kidron did not object to the resumption of the debate at the Assembly or to publishing the aide mémoire.

Note

1. See no. 468.

470. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 25 February 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA214; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Shiloah reports on a background talk he and Eban held with Arthur Dean, in preparation for the meeting with Dulles.

Eban explained the difficulties and doubts of Israel's government and stressed that as much as it wishes to maintain its friendship with the United States, it cannot relinquish its decision to ensure freedom of navigation through the Straits and in the Gulf and the non-return of Egypt to the Gaza Strip. Dean was convinced that Israel's proposal contained a basis for an arrangement, and undertook to contact Dulles forthwith and prepare the ground.[3]

Later the talk with Dulles took place. He mentioned that, as a courtesy to the prime minister, he had acted upon the latter's request and attempted to postpone the debate at the General Assembly, but unfortunately was not successful.

Eban opened with a description of the prevailing mood in Israel and the feeling of conviction that it was justified in its demands. He also stressed how difficult it was for Israel to consider the U.S. proposals under the threat of sanctions. Eban went on to present Israel's minimum demands on the issues under discussion:

The Straits and the Gulf of Aqaba

Israel believes that its original proposals were both just and feasible. However, if the United States claims that it cannot force the hand of the U.N. due to its composition, and it cannot declare explicit assurances and pledges on constitutional

grounds, then Israel is prepared to seek another way out. The American declaration on freedom of navigation according to the 11 February aide mémoire[4] can be bolstered by additional measures. Here Eban presented the points raised by Ben-Gurion[5] and added the following demands:

1) If a two-thirds majority is not obtained at the General Assembly for the stationing of UNEF until a peace arrangement is achieved, the United States will call on the secretary-general to make a pledge to the effect that, at the very least, UNEF will not leave its position without first obtaining approval from the Assembly. When the Assembly discusses such a proposal, the United States will insist that any evacuation of UNEF be approved only under conditions of a peace settlement.[8]
2) The president will send a formal letter to the prime minister saying that if, despite declarations by the United States and other maritime powers, Egypt does renew the blockade after the evacuation of IDF forces and UNEF, the president will take all necessary measures to maintain freedom of navigation.

Israel's right to freedom of navigation

The Israeli government proposes that exercising its right to freedom of navigation through the Straits and in the Gulf not be contingent upon the civil administration leaving the Strip. With regard to the United States, Israel's rights will be recognised upon the withdrawal of the IDF from Sharm el-Sheikh and the withdrawal of the IDF from the Strip and the entry of UNEF.

The Gaza Strip

The Israeli government believes its plan to be preferable to any other from the legal, security, economic and humanitarian standpoints. However, the main point in Israel's position is the demand that under no circumstances shall Egypt be allowed to re-establish a military or civil administration in the Gaza Strip. Therefore Israel proposes that further to the withdrawal of the IDF and the entry of UNEF, a U.N. committee come to the region to investigate and propose a scheme of civil administration for the Strip.[9]

The government of Israel also requests that the United States reiterate once again, in the appropriate manner, its policy concerning Israel's right to unimpeded navigation in the Suez Canal, like any other nation.

Dulles presented his comments on all the points raised by Eban:

1) The United States intends to encourage sailing under an American flag to the Gulf of Aqaba. It does not have the authority to require American vessels to sail any specific sea, but it can promote sailing to Eilat and it will indeed do so.
2) As for the definition "free and innocent passage," the United States prefers wording that stresses the conduct of the ship rather than its flag or cargo.
3) The United States favours the idea of a naval unit of UNEF and will take steps towards the execution of this idea, since this can prolong the length of stay of UNEF.

4) The United States will recognise Israel's right to declare its intent to use force to protect its shipping.
5) The United States will act to encourage as many other maritime powers as possible to join the declaration on the freedom of navigation through the Straits and in the Gulf, or to issue equivalent declarations.
6) The United States will repeat its definition of the function of UNEF and its stay at the Straits as stated by Ambassador Lodge on 2 February.
7) The United States is prepared to agree that UNEF will not evacuate the Straits without prior discussion and approval of the General Assembly.
8) As for the president's moral obligation towards Israel — if Israel withdraws its forces and the blockade is subsequently renewed, Israel will have no reason to regret putting its faith in the United States, and he agrees that an appropriate letter be sent by the president.
9) Dulles accepts Israel's argument that once it evacuates its forces from the Gulf and Gaza and UNEF are deployed in both locations, the charges of belligerency against it are null and void.
10) The United States understands Israel's objection to the return of Egypt to the Strip. However, from a legal point of view, Egypt has rights in the Strip according to the armistice agreement. Therefore it is impossible to get Egypt to renounce its rights in the Strip publicly, but it may be possible to persuade it to relinquish the actual exercise of those rights. He proposes to clarify this issue with the secretary-general. The United States also approves of the idea to send a U.N. committee to the Strip to investigate the situation there.
11) As for the Suez Canal, the United States agrees to reiterate its recognition of Israel's right to navigating the Canal without any discrimination against it.

At the end of this talk, the following points were agreed upon:

1) A joint declaration about this talk would be issued.
2) Israel will prepare an aide mémoire of all points and the wording thereof as agreed in the talk.[10]
3) Eban will see the secretary-general in order to clarify the points which are his responsibility, and especially the matter of the Strip.
4) Every effort will be made by the United States to defer the continuation of the debate in the General Assembly.
5) Every effort will be made by both sides to bring the discussions to a speedy conclusion.

Notes

1. Arthur Dean.
2. No. 466.
3. Dean did in fact call Dulles and give him the main points of Israel's proposal. See *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 142, p. 253n.

4. No. 404.
5. According to Ben-Gurion's instructions, see no. 466.
6. See no. 421, note 6.
7. See no. 381, note 1.
8. In his book, Eban wrote that he added that item on his own initiative, so that Egypt would bear the burden of having to enlist two-thirds of the Assembly members in order to have UNEF evacuated, rather than Israel having to enlist the support of two-thirds of the Assembly in order to ensure that it stayed (see *The Political Battle*, p. 256).
In a telegram he sent that day to Ben-Gurion Eban also wrote: "The secretary kept all five principles appearing in your [telegram no.]145 [no. 466] concerning the Straits, plus a few proposals of my own that ensure a more stable presence of UNEF" (Tel. WNT231, 25 February 1957, 93.01/2186/3).
9. See no. 436.
10. Eban, Shiloah and Rafael wrote the aide mémoire in the form of proposals and answers. The document was then sent to Rountree, Wilcox, Phleger, De Palma and Bergus, who suggested some changes which were included in the final version. The aide mémoire is in file 130.23/3064/5.

471. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban. 25 February 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA149; Inc.: 93.01/2188/9

Summary

Herzog conveys to Eban a reprimand from the prime minister over his "catastrophic error" in his talk with Dulles,[1] and calls his attention to the fact that the government's instructions given to him, a copy of which were telegraphed to the minister of foreign affairs, say the following about Gaza:

1) Under no circumstances may Egypt be allowed to return to Gaza, neither directly nor indirectly.
2) A U.N. committee is to be established to discuss with Israel the problems of the Strip: security, rehabilitation of the population, and the refugee issue. No agreement has been reached concerning the entry of a U.N. force either before or after such a committee; it has only been decided that Israel is willing to discuss with the committee any issue to do with Gaza.

The prime minister is in a difficult position since, if he reports Eban's words to Dulles to the government, it may precipitate an immediate crisis with unknown consequences. Eban must inform the secretary that an unfortunate misunderstanding has occurred, and that the government's instruction was in fact to propose a separation between the two issues: to deal with the matter of the Gulf at once, while leaving Gaza for discussion with a U.N. committee. Naturally, Israel will agree to discuss with this committee anything the United Nation proposes, and it

is prepared to evacuate its military forces from the Strip immediately and replace them with a police force.

3) With reference to the Gulf, the prime minister comments:
   a. The right to self-defence: Ben-Gurion's instructions[2] must be strictly adhered to: that the United States recognises Israel's right to self defence, i.e., the right to take any measures necessary to ensure free passage for its ships through the Straits and in the Gulf.
   b. With reference to item 3 in the instructions — the wording used by the secretary of state is vague, since it refers to not doing anything "contrary to present rules," but "present rules" are that Egypt inspects every vessel sailing through the Straits. Israel therefore requests a clear answer to two questions:
   Does this mean that Egypt will have the right to delay and inspect Israel's commercial vessels?
   Will Israeli warships be allowed to navigate the Straits and the Gulf?
   c. With regard to oil, it is not clear whether the secretary confirmed that U.S. ships will carry oil to Eilat on a regular basis.[3]
   d. The American wording of the item concerning other maritime powers joining the declaration does not mention recognition of Israel's right to self defence.

Notes

1. The reference is to the proposal raised by Eban in his talk with Dulles about the future of the Gaza Strip: that the IDF evacuate the Strip, and after the evacuation **and entry of a U.N. force**, a U.N. committee would come to examine the situation and propose a scheme for administration of the Strip (see no. 470). This proposal angered Ben-Gurion, who saw it as a deviation from the explicit instructions he gave to Eban and as a grave error.
   In his diary, Ben-Gurion criticised Eban harshly: "At six p.m. we received the Eban-Dulles talk, which lasted three hours. The conversation stunned me. Eban did not relay the government's instructions, but rather his own version — undoubtedly without any malicious intent — which Dulles accepted as a constructive plan. This is a catastrophic situation. I telegraphed Eban saying that he must relay to Dulles precisely what the government decided, even though they will certainly not believe that Eban deviated from his instructions and will think that we are untrustworthy: that after we said something to Dulles which he accepted, we backed down" (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 25 February 1957).
   However, after the full minutes of the talk arrived, the impression received was less serious, and the government rescinded its order to Eban to tell Dulles that a mistake had been made (see stenographic record of the government meeting of 26 February 1957, in file 77.0/9/33). In addition, the foreign minister in fact defended Eban's position (see no. 473 below).
2. No. 466.
3. No. 470.

472. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 25 February 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA318; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Eban explains what happened in his talk with Dulles:

1) With regard to oil, the American answer was positive.
2) With regard to the right to self-defence, he worded Israel's demand precisely according to Ben-Gurion's telegram and the answer was positive, but the Americans wish to see the relevant wording.
3) On the problem of separation of the Gulf and Gaza issues: the U.S. position has been that only after the withdrawal of Israel's armed forces and civil administration from Gaza will the United States recognise that Egypt has no claim to belligerency in the Gulf. They are now willing to accept withdrawal of the IDF and the entry of UNEF. This is the utmost that the United States will agree to, and the change is both positive and important.

Eban claims that the written summary which he brought and which was approved by Meir[1] makes it clear that any agreement with the United States will include, as initial stages, the evacuation of the IDF and the entry of UNEF. Even the brief summary given him by Ben-Gurion does not contain any objection to these two steps.

Eban requests instructions from Ben-Gurion: is he expected to try and secure an agreed solution to Gaza that will include the evacuation of Israel's forces, the entry of UNEF, and the sending of a U.N. committee, while leaving all other issues unresolved, except for the non-return of Egypt? If this is not the case, he sees no prospect for progress. Had he, in his conversation with Dulles, excluded the possibility of UNEF entry to Gaza, the talk would have ended in deadlock.

Note

1. No. 451, note 1.

473. G. Meir (New York) to the Prime Minister. 25 February 1957

Coded Tel. XA569; Outg.: 93/01/2186/3

Summary

Meir expresses her opinion that there is no chance of reaching an agreement on the Gaza issue without the entry of UNEF. For this reason it was included in the summary presented by Eban. This agreement indeed makes it difficult for Israel, but the stand taken by Hammarskjöld[1] may in fact provide Israel a way out. It was decided to tell Dulles that, considering Hammarskjöld's position on the return of Egypt and on the definition of UNEF's functions, Israel proposes to handle the Gaza issues and the freedom of navigation issues separately. Israel will consent to the withdrawal of its forces from Gaza and to the sending of a U.N. committee, and if necessary will also consent to reporting to the General Assembly or perhaps also to the presence of a U.N. observer there who would report to the Assembly.

If these proposals are not accepted, Meir proposes to try and achieve consent for sending UNEF to Gaza not as a proper force but rather as a small unit of symbolic value, until the committee concludes its work and the problems are resolved.

For the first time since the war began, the United States is on the same side as Israel in their common struggle against Hammarskjöld, and the minister of foreign affairs thinks that Israel should tread cautiously so as not to destroy this consensus.

Public opinion following the president's speech, as reflected in the press and on the radio, shows considerable support for Israel.

Note

1. See no. 468.

474. M. Comay (Ottawa) to J. Herzog and A. Eban (Washington). 25 February 1957

Coded Tel. NTWA317; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Comay explained to Pearson the instructions given to Eban.[1] Pearson's reaction:

1) He was pleased to hear about the chance of reaching an agreement with the United States and stressed that Israel has no interest more vital than cooperation with the United States.
2) There is no "Pearson Plan" for a naval force in the Gulf. He approves of the idea, but Burns did not request it and Canada did not propose it.
3) UNEF should not be withdrawn from the Gulf or from Sinai at Egypt's demand without the secretary-general first submitting the issue for discussion at the General Assembly. Such a discussion will arouse the world and will render Egyptian aggression more difficult.
4) Pearson is convinced that stationing UNEF as a buffer along the Egyptian border is highly desirable, and that a token force should also be stationed on the Israeli side. Comay pressured him not to mention this, and Pearson agreed to speak only in general terms about the stationing of UNEF along the border.
5) He is all for U.N. rule of the Strip, but does not see how Egypt's rights can be denied in principle. He is contemplating the possibility of a token participation of Egypt for the interim period and determining far-reaching arrangements at a later stage.

Comay responded that as far as Israel is concerned, the connection between Egypt and the Gaza Strip has been completely severed and it will not agree to its renewal under any circumstances.

Note

1. No. 466.

475. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 26 February 1957

Coded Tel. WIA320; Outg.: 93.01/2215/14

Summary

In reply to Ben-Gurion's telegram reprimanding him, Eban says that he was deeply offended.

Addressing the matter at hand, he explains as follows:

1) No instruction or authorised address by the Israeli government ever contained a rejection of the possibility that UNEF would enter Gaza; the instructions he received in Israel[2] only object to the return of Egypt.
   In the summary he brought from New York, which was approved by Meir[3] and discussed by the government, it was made perfectly clear that the withdrawal of Israel's forces from Gaza means that UNEF will enter instead.

2) The political aspect is even more important than the formal aspect. If Israel persists in its objection to UNEF in Gaza, there is no chance of an agreed solution either in Gaza or in the Gulf, nor will there be any chance of obtaining favourable public opinion internationally. The separation of the two issues will be possible only once a U.N. body enters Gaza and cancels out Egypt's belligerency claim. The minister of foreign affairs also addressed this point in her telegram.[4]

Eban resents the criticism levelled at him after the four long months in which he fought a vital war for Israel's freedom of navigation, safe borders, mending fences with the United States and influencing public opinion around the globe. Therefore, if he made a "catastrophic" mistake, the government should be given the chance to draw its own conclusions about him, if it so wishes.

Notes

1. See no. 471.
2. See no. 456, note 2.
3. No. 451, note 1.
4. No. 473.

476. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 26 February 1957

Coded Tel.: WIA320; Inc.: 93.01/2215/14

Summary

Ben-Gurion expresses his regret over the misunderstanding with Eban. He thought Eban understood that the government's instructions as summarised in the document given to him before his return to New York[1] contained everything that should be said about Gaza at that stage. As for Sharm el-Sheikh, additional details were relayed in a separate telegram.[2]

The minutes of the talk with Dulles[3] provide a slightly different, and more positive picture of the talk than did the initial report,[4] both on the Gaza issue and in general. In the government meeting which took place that day (26 February), Eban's approach to the Gaza issue was considered, and this is partially reflected in the government's decisions. Ben-Gurion ends his telegram with the appreciative and encouraging Biblical phrase "*hazak ve'ematz*" ("Be strong and of good courage!").

Notes

1. See no. 456, note 2.
2. No. 466.
3. This telegram from Shiloah to Herzog contains the text of the questions and answers in the Eban-Dulles meeting, and is more detailed than his previous report (no. 470). See Tel. 251, 25 February 1957, 130.02/2459/15 and compare with *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 143, pp. 254–267.
4. No. 470.

477. J. Herzog to G. Meir (Jerusalem) and A. Eban (New York). 26 February 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA155; Outg.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Following the reports on the Eban-Dulles talk,[1,2] Herzog sends a message to Eban and Meir, instructing them to tell Dulles that since the secretary-general supports the return of Egypt to the Strip, and since Israel will under no circumstances agree to that, the problem is even more complex than had been thought. Israel proposes to separate the issue of the Gulf from that of Gaza, and to consider resolving the Gulf issue an urgent and immediate goal, because Israel is holding territory recognised as Egyptian, and ensuring freedom of navigation for Israel is more easily addressed than solving the Gaza issue.

Herzog proposes taking action on two fronts:

1) **The Gulf of Aqaba**: Further clarification is required for details that have already been discussed. He is convinced that an agreement can be reached that will enable the withdrawal of Israel's forces and the ensuring of freedom of navigation.

   Since the General Assembly has resumed its deliberations, Israel proposes that the United States table a proposal for stationing a U.N. force in Sharm el-Sheikh according to the definitions of the president and of Lodge[3]. Alternatively, a proposal can be made to include a naval unit in the U.N. force, in order to prevent hindrance to the freedom of navigation; or else it can be proposed that the Assembly support the U.S. declaration that the Gulf of Aqaba is an international waterway and recognising Israel's right to self-defence according to Article 51 of the U.N. Charter. Should none of the above proposals be accepted by the United Nations, Israel requests that the United States oppose sanctions; and should sanctions be decided on nonetheless, Israel requests that the United States not carry them out.

Concurrently with the activities at the Assembly, further discussions will be held in Washington.

2) **Gaza**: Israel proposes the appointment of a U.N. committee that would come to Israel to discuss the situation on the spot and make suggestions on the future of the Strip. Israel would immediately announce its consent to the U.N. dispatching observers to Gaza. Israel will also agree to report to the Assembly how matters are being handled in the Strip.

   As for the proposal made by Meir and Eban that Israel will announce the withdrawal of its forces from the Strip — they would also have to announce that the IDF is to remain on the international border between Gaza and Sinai, and both the Israeli administration and the police will remain in the Strip.

   It should be made perfectly clear that Israel will not consent to the return of Egypt to the Strip, either directly nor indirectly, even if the committee recommends it. However, to avoid any difficulties at this stage, Israel does not insist that this principle be established as a prerequisite for the committee's activities.

Notes

1. See no. 476, note 3.
2. No. 473.
3. See no. 381, note 1.

478. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (New York) and J. Herzog (Jerusalem). 26 February 1957

Coded Tel. NWT217; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Shiloah summarises the latest Eban-Dulles talk that day, attended by Phleger, Wilcox, Rountree and himself. Eban described the new situation that was created as a result of the talks with the secretary-general[1] who stated explicitly that he must act under the assumption of Egyptian control in the Strip. This premise of the secretary-general ruins any possibility of making progress on the Gaza Strip issue in the spirit of the earlier talk with Dulles.[2] Eban reiterated the proposal that Israel will evacuate the Gulf according to the agreement and along the lines discussed: Israel evacuates its military forces from the Strip, a U.N. committee will come to review the future administration and that would conclude the matter of complying

with the Assembly's resolutions and will enable returning to a proper discussion of the remaining issues.

Dulles said that continued efforts must be made to resolve all the issues and was not willing to accept separating them. Eban mentioned Pearson's speech at the Assembly,[3] and said that it seems that Pearson represents the state of mind of a considerable number of U.N. missions and is striving to reach a solution in the Strip that does not allow for Egypt's return. The secretary recounted that in his meeting with the president, Mollet and Pineau, Pineau made a proposal which in their shared opinion may lead to a solution. He suggested that the Israelis meet with Pineau and listen to his proposal, while refusing to divulge its essence, saying only that both he and the president approve it.

Notes

1. No. 468.
2. No. 470.
3. The debate in the U.N. General Assembly on the situation in the Middle East was resumed on 26 February. Canadian Minister of External Affairs Pearson proposed a "constructive compromise" plan for the resolution of the crisis, along different lines to the draft resolution. Its main points were as follows:
The withdrawal of Israel's military and civilian forces from the Gaza Strip and the entry of UNEF; resumption of the activities of UNRWA; appointing a U.N. governor for the Strip; stationing UNEF in the Gulf of Aqaba to prevent clashes between Egypt and Israel or the exercising of belligerency rights and to prevent interference with "innocent passage" in the Gulf; deploying UNEF on either side of the armistice demarcation line; an explicit undertaking by both Israel and Egypt to keep strictly to the directives of the armistice agreement.
Pearson presented his proposal in terms of an interim arrangement, saying that the final arrangement is up to the United Nations.
(GAOR, 11th session, Plenary Meeting, 26.2.1957, pp. 1201–1212)

479. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 26 February 1957

Coded Tel. 392; Inc.: 130.23/3098/5

Summary

Elath expresses his opinion that Macmillan's statement in Parliament on 25 February constitutes an important step forward in the British government's position on the form of a settlement according to the General Assembly resolution of 2 November. Lloyd addressed Parliament on 11 February, speaking of two separate stages: first

the withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces and only then ensuring freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. Macmillan, in his statement about the nature of the arrangement in the Gulf, stressed that the withdrawal from Sharm el-Sheikh and the recognition of freedom of navigation in the Gulf must be linked. On the subject of the IDF's withdrawal from Gaza he expressed Britain's stand, according to which responsibility for the Strip should be given to the United Nations and a U.N. force should be stationed there. On this matter, too, he stressed the connection between Israel's withdrawal and the establishment of a new administration. Though he did not say in so many words that this proposal precludes any return of Egypt to the Strip, several members of Parliament believe that this is what Macmillan meant. Israel must see to it that a reply is given in Parliament which is official and binding upon the British government.

The press highlighted the importance of the prime minister's statement and the questions raised by Israel's supporters in the House of Commons following it. The statement made by Opposition leader Hugh Gaitskell was of special note. He expressed his hope that Egypt will give up any thought of belligerency when Israel withdraws its armed forces. The prime minister expressed his agreement with this sentiment.

480. M. Tov (New York) to the Latin American Division. 26 February 1957

Coded Tel. AX571; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Tov reviews the position of the Latin American countries on imposing sanctions on Israel: Honduras, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Cuba and Peru would vote against; Bolivia supports freedom of navigation but would abstain for the time being.

In a meeting of the advisory committee, the representative of Colombia proposed an arrangement for Gaza similar to the rule of the League of Nations in Colombian territories occupied by Peru after the war between the two countries. He is optimistic that a solution will be found.

481. A. Eban (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion. 27 February 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA221; Inc.: 130.02/2459/3

Summary

Eban reviews the development of the French initiative.

In Dulles' talk with Eban[1] it became apparent that the stand taken by the U.N. secretary-general had brought negotiations to a dead end. Dulles then urged the Israeli representatives to contact Pineau in order to hear his new idea for a fundamental solution to the Gaza problem. He mentioned that the idea was discussed in a talk between Mollet and Eisenhower and is acceptable to the United States.

Pineau gave Eban the main points of the plan and a short aide mémoire explaining it. Eban is telegraphing the exact text of the aide mémoire[2] and warns that this should not be seen as approval of the plan, and care should be taken that the United States does not get that impression. Ambassador Alphand told Eban that the United States approves of the plan. Consequently, the Americans will avoid submitting their own plan[3] to the General Assembly, making it possible to consult with both governments.

The main points of the plan are as follows:

1) UNEF will have full and exclusive authority for both military and civil administration of Gaza.
2) During the transition period, i.e., between the withdrawal of Israel's forces and a peace settlement, the U.N. will carry out the following functions: safeguarding life and property, police services, efficient civil administration, refugee aid programmes and promoting the development of the region and its residents.
3) During this period, if Egypt should instigate violence in the Strip, or if there are any changes in the premises enabling Israel's withdrawal from the Strip, Israel will be free to "defend its rights."
4) In its announcement at the Assembly that it has decided to evacuate the Strip, Israel will declare that it is withdrawing only on the basis of the above-mentioned premises.
5) The United States, France, Britain and other countries will confirm in the Assembly Israel's right to cancel its withdrawal should those premises not materialise. If there is any outburst of violence in the Strip, the United States will consult France and the other participants in the plan, who will jointly decide on suitable action inside and outside the U.N. aimed at achieving a settlement based on justice and international law.
6) The above-mentioned statements are to be made in the General Assembly, under the assumption that the countries involved will prevent the enlisting of a two-thirds majority against it.

7) The logic behind the plan is based on the American proposal for the Gulf problem: the international nature of both the Gulf and the Strip is dictated by unilateral declarations by the powers, in addition to their recognition of Israel's right to defend its rights. The guarantee for the non-withdrawal of the U.N. force and the non-entry of Egypt is achieved by creating a situation whereby such actions lead to a danger of war.

Eban thinks highly of the plan since it aims at bypassing the majority at the United Nations. Another objective is to allow the United States and France, by combining this plan and the Straits plan, effectively to disable Nasser by depriving him of freedom of action in both places. The plan is more positive than Pearson's,[4] and no initiative in the Assembly is friendlier to Israel than Pearson's. The intention is to carry out the plan during Mollet and Pineau's visit to the United States. The government of Israel needs to make a crucial decision of principle here: is it prepared, together with the United States and France, to approve of a special administration in the Strip, one based on de facto exclusive international control, without Egypt?

In Eban's opinion, Israel's reply must be in the affirmative for several reasons:

1) Israel's main objective in Gaza is the non-return of Egypt, and this objective is more vital than any other.
2) Despite all efforts, no other way has been found to ascertain that Egypt will not return to the Strip. This objective cannot be ensured by a vote in the General Assembly or by discussions with the secretary-general.
3) Cooperation with the United States and France on so crucial a matter is a security and international asset. Establishing the responsibility of these states for eliminating trouble in Gaza relieves some of Israel's burden. The other option is for Israel to remain in Gaza, in the face of worldwide public opinion to the contrary, a step which would weaken it politically and economically and embroil it in progressively deeper complications.

Notes

1. No. 478.
2. In fact, Dulles composed the aide mémoire as part of the U.S. initiative for a solution to the Gaza problem. (In *FRUS*, too, it is described as an aide mémoire by Dulles, see *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 161, pp. 298–299). According to the American documents, Dulles convinced Pineau to adopt the ideas formulated in his earlier discussions with Eisenhower (*ibid.*, no. 157, pp. 285–289), but did not fully disclose to Pineau the U.S. intentions. The aide mémoire was given to Pineau to read, and the latter recommended deleting from it any mention of the armistice agreement, which was indeed done (*ibid.*, no. 164, pp. 305–306).
3. The U.S. proposal called for placing the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip under U.N. supervision, without mentioning sanctions against Israel, and was in line with Pearson's

proposal (see no. 478, note 3). In addition, the United States rejected Israel's request for separating the Gulf of Aqaba issue from that of the Gaza Strip.

4. *Ibid.*
5. On the day of her arrival in Washington, Golda Meir met Dulles and the heads of the State Department together with Eban and Shiloah. There is no account of this meeting in Foreign Ministry documents. According to American accounts (see *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 162, pp. 299–303) Meir and Eban informed Dulles that Israel agreed in principle to Pineau's plan, but required clarifications on Egypt's non-return to Gaza and the ensuring of freedom of navigation (see no. 484, note 2). Until an agreed version of the text was reached, Dulles was asked to obtain an extension of the debate in the U.N. Assembly, which had already been in session for several days, in order to prevent the imposition of sanctions on Israel. Dulles claimed that the matter was out of his hands, and pressured Israel for an immediate reply and a commitment to undertake the necessary steps to effect withdrawal and the handing over of responsibility to a U.N. force.

482. G. Meir and A. Eban (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion. 27 February 1957

Coded Tel. WIA255; Outg.: 93.04/2186/2

Summary

Meir and Eban press Ben-Gurion to accept Pineau's plan, as approved by Dulles, immediately and to give Dulles and Pineau an affirmative answer in principle.

1) Without a prompt response in principle, the matter may come to nothing.
2) After giving an answer in principle, Israel would still be able to argue for rewording and amendments.
3) There is no prospect of a better settlement in sight. If Israel does not accept the French proposal, its isolation will be complete.[1] Within the United Nations there is no state which would support Israel on such a settlement. The great advantage of this proposal is that it does not require a U.N. resolution but relies on statements by friendly nations.

Note

1. Ben-Gurion himself used the same argument when speaking to Moshe Dayan on the following day, and further reinforced it by stressing Israel's dependence on France as a source of arms for Israel (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 28 February 1957).

483. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 27 February 1957

Coded Tel. 222; Inc.: 130/02/2459/3

Summary

Eban explains that the American initiative is aimed at achieving a solution outside the General Assembly, in order to bypass the unfavourable balance of potential votes. This led to the decision to give Israel guarantees by the maritime powers and to present the United Nations with a fait accompli. His reasoning is that:

1) The United States and the maritime powers have the power to establish the international nature of the Gulf whether the Assembly likes the idea or not.
2) The same goes for Israel's right to self defence. If the United States, France, Britain and other countries explicitly recognise this right, nobody can deny it to Israel, since these states have enough power to quash any objections both in the Security Council and in the Assembly.

Eban recommends not to risk a vote in the Assembly on the doctrine of an international waterway in the Gulf, but rather to enlist more maritime powers to support it; similarly, not to put Israel's right to defend its navigation to a vote in the Assembly, since this right is something that should be taken for granted and has already been recognised by the United States.

Note

1. No. 477.

484. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 27 February 1957

Coded Tel. TNW158; Outg.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Herzog relays the government's decision to Eban[1]:

1) The government agrees in principle to Pineau's proposal, on the assumption that it means that until peace is achieved, only a U.N. force will be in the Strip and there will be no return of the Egyptians, their armed forces, their police or civil administration, in any shape or form, either directly or indirectly.

2) This condition must be made perfectly clear. If for some reason it cannot be stated clearly in the proposed wording, a commitment to it must be made, even if it is secret.
3) This agreement in principle is contingent upon the premise that freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba will be ensured.
4) Inquiries must be made to find out whether Israel's agreement to international commitments as stated in Pineau's proposal does not apply to the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement; otherwise it means that Israel is obligated to return the Strip to Egypt, as it says in the armistice agreement, which would make Pineau's proposal meaningless and unacceptable.

Under separate cover, Herzog is telegraphing amendments to the text of Pineau's proposal.

Notes

1. The government was convened for an extraordinary session on 27 February in the evening, after receiving the French proposal, and Eban and the foreign minister pressed it to accept without delay (see nos. 482, 483). Ben-Gurion immediately raised questions which were relayed to Eban by telephone:
   Will Israel's declaration on the evacuation be given irrespective of the issue of the freedom of navigation in the Straits, or after an agreed settlement of the issue?
   Should Israel's declaration be linked to the condition in Article 2(c) in the proposal, namely that the U.N. force remain in the Gaza Strip until a peace settlement is achieved?
   If Egypt should cause trouble in the Strip by organising groups of Fedaiyun, even without actually returning, how will Israel deal with that, since it cannot return to Gaza while the U.N. force is there?
   Eban replied that Israel will announce its evacuation only after the issues of the Straits and the Gulf are settled, that the announcement must be dependent upon the U.N. force remaining in the Strip until peace is achieved and that Israel will be able to exercise its right to self defence should Egypt launch operations in the Strip (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 27 February 1957).
2. See Herzog to the Israel embassy in Washington, TNW159, 28 February 1957, 130.02/2459/3.
   Ben-Gurion suggested several amendments to the proposed draft of the declaration:
   1) The opening of the declaration says that Israel is withdrawing according to U.N. resolutions. This must be specific, to the effect that the withdrawal is according to the first resolution of the Assembly of 2 February, to prevent any possible misconception that Israel also accepts the part of the second resolution from that date which calls for the stationing of a U.N. force on Israel's territory as well.
   2) Instead of the sentence in the original version saying that Israel hopes that the task of the U.N. force will continue from the transition period until a peace settlement, the prime minister suggest that it say that the civil and military administration are to be left exclusively in the hands of the United Nations until peace is achieved.

3) At the beginning of Article 2 (d) Ben-Gurion suggested adding that Israel does not maintain that there is a state of belligerency between it and Egypt, and will avoid any act of hostility against Egypt on a mutual basis.
4) As for the promised declarations on the part of the United States and other maritime powers, the prime minister proposed to omit here any mention of the expression "transition period." He also stressed especially that any reference to the armistice agreement must be deleted from this document and from any other agreement (see also *The Political Battle*, pp. 274–275).

485. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 27 February 1957

Coded Tel. WNT224; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Eban informs Herzog that the United States has agreed to give recognition to the Israeli announcement to be made at the General Assembly in the following terms:

"Israel will protect ships of its own flag exercising the right of free passage on the high seas and in international waters. Interference by the use or threat of force with ships of Israel flag exercising free passage in the Gulf of Aqaba and through the Straits of Tiran will be regarded by Israel as an attack, entitling her to exercise her inherent right of self defence under article 51 of the charter, and to take such measures as are necessary to ensure the free passage of her ships in the Gulf and in the Straits."

486. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 27 February 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA223; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Eban warns that if the General Assembly resolution mentions a naval patrol in the Gulf it may also include a prohibition of the entry of warships of all parties involved in the conflict, based on the principle of separation of forces. Therefore caution should be exercised and perhaps the matter should be delayed until circumstances necessitate.

On the other hand, Eban believes that the parallel clarification received from Dulles and the secretary-general is of greater practical merit, namely:

UNEF should not be recalled from the Gulf without Israel and the Assembly being forewarned through the Advisory Committee and given a chance to appeal.

The United States will oppose the recall of UNEF unless the state of active belligerency has been cancelled.

If these points are agreed upon, then there is no great material difference between this option and permanent stationing of UNEF.

487. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 27 February 1957

Coded Tel. 396; Inc.: 130/02/2459/12

Summary

Elath expresses his opinion that Britain will support Pearson's proposal[1] even though the Foreign Office has not yet reacted formally to his speech. Macmillan, too, told Eban in their conversation[2] that, for the good of the matter at hand and in the best interests of Britain, it is preferable that other countries, such as Canada, be directly active on matters concerning Egypt. This view is now of paramount importance in determining Britain's policy on Israel's struggle in the United Nations.

Even though the British government would be willing to support Israel's proposal of appointing a U.N. committee to review the situation in the Gaza Strip, Elath does not think that, after Pearson's proposal, the British mission to the Assembly would go as far as introducing the idea of such a committee on its own initiative.

Under present circumstances, with Macmillan hesitating on the eve of his meeting with Eisenhower in Bermuda,[3] and given the British Foreign Office's hostile attitude towards Israel, it is very unlikely that the British government will speak in Israel's favour to the Canadian government and other Western governments, either on this or on any other controversial matter. Nevertheless, efforts must be continued to explore all avenues.

Notes

1. See no. 478, note 3.
2. Nos. 454, 465.
3. See no. 454, note 8.

488. Israel Embassy in London to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 28 February 1957

Coded Tel. 402; Inc.: 130.02/2459/3

Summary

The embassy in London relays a message from Goldmann to the prime minister.

The ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in London paid him a formal visit on 26 February and requested to convey the following message to the prime minister: although Germany takes no stand on the issues of the Gulf of Aqaba and of Gaza, it sees it as its duty to advise the government of Israel to adopt a moderate position on these issues and to do its utmost to reach a settlement agreeable to all parties involved. The person behind this request is Dulles, who asked the German ambassador in Washington to advise Israel in that vein.

At Goldmann's suggestion, this was not done formally via the Israeli representative in the Federal Republic, Shinnar, but rather through him, in a friendly and informal manner. This move implies that in case of a clash, the United States may pressure Germany to halt reparation payments, and that Germany may give in to such pressure. A U.N. resolution on its own would not affect Germany, but American pressure may well do so.

Goldmann is in touch with Adenauer, and will pay him a visit in case a resolution on sanctions is taken.

489. Israel Minister in Warsaw to the East European Division. 28 February 1957

Coded Tel. 198; Inc.: 130.09/2306/12

Summary

The Israel minister reports, on the basis of reliable sources in Warsaw, that as a result of a secret investigation into the issue of emigration, it has been decided at the top echelons of the party that emigration would not be halted. However, instructions have already been issued to practice foot-dragging and evasion with regard to several categories of applicants such as military and security personnel, people with technical professions, experts and scientists, holders of essential positions, and so on. This means in effect that people of these categories will not be issued passports. No obstruction will be made with regard to artisans.

490. Editorial Note

Final Discussions in the Department of State on the Formulation of Israel's Proposed Statement at the U.N. General Assembly (28 February 1957)

On 28 February two decisive discussions took place at the State Department, aimed at arriving at an agreed version of the address to be made by the minister of foreign affairs in the General Assembly, in which she was to announce Israel's final withdrawal. The senior staff of the State Department took part in both discussions, but Dulles took part in the second one only.

There is no account of these two meetings in the files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Eban's publication, *The Political Battle*, contains a description of the meetings in the State Department, and the text seems to be a copy of a telegram sent by Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We also have the American report on the two meetings as it appears in *FRUS*, which also contains the final and agreed version of Israel's declaration in the Assembly (*FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, nos. 164, 165, 167, pp. 306–309, 311–317).

Below is Eban's report:

"On 28 February in the afternoon, accompanied by Shiloah and Rafael [this talk was also attended by Jacob Robinson, legal advisor to Israel's mission to the United Nations] I met with Phleger, Rountree, Wilcox, De Palma, Wilkins and Bergus. Phleger was the chief speaker among the Americans.

The meeting opened with a thorough review in order to summarise the 24 February talk, according to a report I drafted that evening (see no. 470). Phleger suggested a few amendments and deletions which I accepted in full. This review resulted in the document contained in the appendix (*The Political Battle*, pp. 279a–279c) constituting an agreed description of the position taken by the two governments. It should be mentioned that Phleger and his colleagues gave special attention to our declaration of our right to self defence in the case of an attack on Israeli shipping in the Gulf of Eilat [Aqaba]. Not only did they not object, but they explicitly said that Israel has the full right to make such a declaration, providing it is worded in keeping with Article 51 of the U.N. Charter.

Once the discussion of this document — which addresses the matter of navigation rather than that of Gaza — was completed, the following procedure was agreed: I would propose a text for the declaration to be made by the minister of foreign affairs which will cover the two issues, the Gulf of Eilat and Gaza. The section on the Gulf will be written based on the points agreed upon in this document which we had only just finished reviewing in great detail.

The section on the Gaza Strip will be written according to Pineau's draft [no. 481] and the amendments and clarifications discussed by the three governments in the last few days. Dulles and Pineau will read the draft of the Israeli declaration so

that they will be able to "note it with approval" when making their announcement in the Assembly. In this way the Israeli declaration will clearly be seen as a joint policy of Israel, the United States, France, and any other governments that may wish to identify with it during the debate in the Assembly. I proposed a draft for the Israeli declaration. The section on Eilat was my own handiwork, though based on the premises and wording discussed with the United States since 11 February. The section on Gaza was taken in full from the amended Pineau draft. In other words: the Eilat section was mostly the result of Israel-U.S. collaboration whereas the Gaza section was the result of Israel-France collaboration.

At this stage of the review with Phleger and his team we received a message that the secretary of state was free and wished to take part in the detailed review in person. We got up and went down to his office, with a horde of journalists following us in the corridor and in the lift.

So we sat around the table in the secretary of state's office — Israel represented by Eban, Shiloah and Rafael; the United States by Dulles, Herter, Phleger, Rountree, Wilcox, De Palma and Bergus. Copies of the draft I prepared were distributed to all, and a very thorough and painstaking review began of every sentence and every word. A copy of the document I had before me is attached. Dulles and his colleagues proposed amendments, and wherever we accepted them I inserted them in my handwriting into the body of the draft. We went over the document one sentence at a time.

Wherever the wording was acceptable to them, they hinted at their approval ('no comment' or 'OK'). Finally we arrived at an agreed draft of the declaration of the foreign minister, and both parties were pleased with the finished product. It was agreed that Pineau, too, would be given the chance to see the draft before it was finalised.

The main amendments proposed by Dulles, Phleger and their colleagues were as follows:

In the statement on the intent to withdraw, instead of 'full withdrawal,' they proposed 'full and prompt withdrawal.'

Instead of detailing all the items of the 11 February aide mémoire on free passage in the Straits, they made reference to that document as a whole, while quoting its most salient sections. On the other hand, they placed explicit emphasis on the U.S. policy of leaving UNEF in the Straits for a prolonged period of time.

The Americans went in great detail into the discussion of our right to defend Israeli navigation in the Gulf. They insisted that we exercise that right only if our passage is interfered with by the **use of force**. Where I had written 'interference by the use or threat of force,' they stubbornly proposed 'interference by **armed force**.' When we accepted their wording, we received their explicit consent to this vital point in our position.

In the section on Gaza they insisted that it say that the U.N. would be the agency in charge of managing services, etc., but did not want to write 'the sole agency.' At

this point Dulles said that what they are trying to achieve is de facto exclusion of Egypt, but it is highly doubtful that anyone can guarantee that no Egyptian will ever come to Gaza in order symbolically to maintain Egypt's legal right as it appears in the armistice agreement. It is possible that once in a while a representative of Egypt will come for some legal consultation or for talks with the U.N. authorities. In addition, it is hoped that ties between Israel and the Gaza Strip will not be cut; on the contrary, they ought to become more 'intimate.' (On the eve of this meeting Pineau said to Meir that, in France's opinion, there is no way of guaranteeing that no Egyptian will ever enter Gaza. The main thing is that in practice, control will be **completely** in the hands of the United Nations and not in those of Egypt.)

Where it said that the United Nations would stay in its position until peace is achieved, the Americans proposed 'or a definitive arrangement on the future of the Gaza Strip.'

When this discussion was over, Dulles said that Lodge would receive instructions to make a positive note of this declaration. I wished to know whether we could be told what Lodge would say. Dulles said that they were only now beginning to formulate the statement, but was willing to give me his guidelines to the writers. He read out to me some sentences that expressed total identification with the foreign minister's declaration as 'reasonable and legitimate' and in fact as embodying Israel's basic rights. Dulles' words definitely put my mind at ease.

However, as it turned out, further developments and processes came about that very night, and Lodge embarked on a new and independent aide mémoire on Gaza that was unrelated to the Pineau document."

491. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 1 March 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA325; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Eban reports that he had requested another talk with Dulles, in order to emphasise the importance of the non-return of Egypt to Gaza.

Eban stressed to Dulles the vital importance of this issue to Israel, and said that the decision to go along with Pineau's plan is based on the premise that Egypt is not to return to Gaza in any shape or form. This is a central and basic consideration, and therefore it is worrying that its implementation depends on Hammarskjöld.

Dulles said that he welcomes this unofficial opportunity to present his views to Eban, and said the following:

He assumes Israel realises what a great political victory it is achieving. The opening of the Gulf of Aqaba as an international waterway is secured with

practically one hundred percent certainty. In Gaza, the age of Egyptian control has ended, and beyond all that, Israel is attaining a most important achievement – the strengthening of its friendship with the United States. The Arabs have an accurate assessment of the situation, and it is no wonder that they are disappointed. Friendship and cooperation with the United States, France and other nations are more important to Israel's security than any other factor.

As for Gaza, the U.S. position is clear: complete international governance without Egypt. This is the objective of the plan worked out with Mollet and Pineau. Egypt has no good reason to return to Gaza, which never was sovereign Egyptian territory in the first place.

The United States is not omnipotent but will dedicate its best efforts to ensure that Egypt does not return to Gaza, either in military or civilian form.

This is also the opinion of the French ministers. Israel has no better friends than France and the United States.

There is, however, a two-fold concern:

(a) Will Hammarskjöld see to the establishment of the international administration desirable to Israel, without Egyptian influence?

(b) Will Egypt violate the pledges it made to the secretary-general and to the U.S., according to which they would acquiesce in an international administration in Gaza and will not attempt to undermine or weaken it?

Dulles asked Eban to tell the government of Israel again that the United States will strive for the non-return of Egypt to Gaza. U.S. policy is that the United Nations, and no other body, shall administer Gaza until the final settlement, and U.N. rule will be absolute.

The choice facing Israel was a difficult one. But when he compares the agreed-upon arrangement with the situation that would arise if Israel remains in the two locations against all of world opinion, he finds that the balance is a positive one.

At the end of their conversation Dulles promised to speak to Hammarskjöld and Pineau, and expressed his personal appreciation of Eban for his efforts in the area of U.S.-Israel relations.

Note

1. The meeting was held on 28 February. See also *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 173, pp. 325–326.

492. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 1 March 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA326; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Eban describes the expected developments at the General Assembly:

He has reached a version of Israel's statement at the Assembly agreed to by Dulles and will also have it approved by Pineau. Dulles received an exact definition of the transition period during which the United Nations will have control of the Gaza Strip — from the entry of UNEF until a final settlement of the Gaza problem or a comprehensive peace.

The announcements to be made by the United States, France, Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Australia and European states will confirm the premises expressed in Israel's announcement.

The Arabs are very angry, but since there will be no voting on any resolutions, the West need not be concerned with trying to secure their votes; the assumption is that the plan will go through; that is, the announcements will be heard and the Assembly will disperse.

The minister of foreign affairs will open the Assembly with her statement. There is much sympathetic anticipation and the public openly demonstrates its pleasure that the conflict has ended with considerable political advantages for Israel.

493. Statement by G. Meir, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the U.N. General Assembly. 1 March 1957

Copy: 93.03/150/2

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 366.
2. No. 404.
3. Editorial Note no. 366.
4. See no. 469.
5. See Editorial Note no. 11.
6. See Editorial Note no. 446.
7. See no. 462, note 1.
8. The last part of the speech, which expressed hope for co-operation in the future between Israel and its neighbours, was omitted.

494. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Warsaw. 1 March 1957

Coded Tel. 464; Outg.: 130.09/2306/9

Summary

The East European division informs the Israel legation in Warsaw that they have asked the United States division to tell the embassy in Washington that there is both external and internal pressure on the government of Poland to change its policy.[1] One of the arguments given is that mass emigration attests to rampant antisemitism in Poland and is damaging to its image. Even though there is no evidence that the Polish government intends to change its policy, it is essential to support it.

The division suggests that a Jewish leader, perhaps someone like Israel Goldstein,[2] should tell the Polish ambassador that U.S. Jewry and all Western Jewry welcome Poland's liberal attitude towards emigration, which proves that Poland respects the freedom of the individual. This policy will enhance the trust and cooperation between Poland and the United States.

The time is now especially ripe because of the current negotiations in Washington on aid to Poland and the proof of the importance of Jewish and pro-Israel public opinion on the issue of the Sinai crisis.

Notes

1. That is, to adopt a tougher policy towards Jews wishing to leave Poland, see no. 489.
2. The president of the American Jewish Congress.

495. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2 March 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA328; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Eban reports on the developments at the General Assembly on 1 March.

The address given by the minister of foreign affairs was well-received and the press is lauding the decision of the government of Israel. The paragraph about the right to self defence evoked particular interest.

The address given by Lodge was satisfactory on the issue of the Straits; i.e., it confirmed the memorandum of 11 February, plus the American stance in favour of stationing UNEF on a permanent basis, and it also noted that the secretary-general must apply to the General Assembly before complying with any request to recall UNEF. Lodge said that the United States is making a note of Israel's announcement and finds that Israel's expectations are in line with the Assembly's resolutions and are not unreasonable. His comments about Gaza contained significant deviations both from the content of the original Pineau-Dulles letter,[2] and from what Israel had been told in the talks of the last few days: he quoted in full from the secretary-general's declaration of 24 January, which implies the need for Egypt's agreement regarding the future of the Strip and he included a statement that the future of the Strip will be determined within the armistice agreement and a call on the two parties to cooperate in carrying out the secretary-general's proposal as contained in the above mentioned declaration.

The United States managed to elicit reasonably good speeches from the representatives of Argentina, the Philippines and Spain. France and Costa Rica gave excellent speeches. The Europeans and the British Commonwealth representatives decided to postpone their participation to the next session. Fawzi surprised everyone with his moderate approach and by not challenging the speeches of Meir or others' speeches, but it is very likely that this show of moderation is merely a ruse. It was decided to resume the session within a few days, and meanwhile Hammarskjöld decided that Burns would meet with Dayan to discuss the carrying out of the commitments undertaken by the minister of foreign affairs.

Further to the events at the Assembly, Eban reports the following:

On 1 March a meeting was also held of NATO states, without the United States. It was decided to support Israel, but the participants also expressed their wish that Israel would use the time until the resumption of debate at the General Assembly to begin implementation, and in particular to begin talks with Burns. Even the Canadians and the Dutch took that line. Pearson and Pineau both approached Eban with this request.

Immediately after the session was over, Eban contacted the State Department and pointed out the deviations in Lodge's speech. Eban argued that every single word in the address given by Meir had been approved by Dulles, and therefore the latter is committed to the assumptions in it. Eban had no complaints with regard to the handling of the issue of the Straits but the references to Gaza in the speech called for clarification. Eban spoke to Dulles and explained Israel's concern. Dulles said he thought the events at the Assembly went quite well. Lodge had asked permission to make a few "small" changes so as to ensure that Hammarskjöld would not obstruct the plan, but the State Department believes that these changes are not vital. The U.S. policy is one of complete freedom of navigation in the Straits and international administration of Gaza. The first objective was achieved and the secretary believes that the second

will be achieved too. The United States will discuss with Israel how to implement its promises, but the Assembly should be brought to a close soon.

Meir, Najar and Eban also spoke with Mollet, Pineau, Joxe, Alphand and Picot. Mollet was not sufficiently familiar with the problems and the other four did not identify with Israel's concerns. The Israelis did not accept this approach and claimed that efforts must be made to alter the elements in Lodge's speech which had not been agreed. It was agreed with Pineau that Alphand would go to Washington and join Eban in the latter's attempts to get a statement from Dulles clarifying that the United States supports the statements made by Meir.

Pineau asked to speak to Eban personally and said that the main point was not the formula, but rather the reality, and the fact is that France and the United States have agreed to ensure freedom of passage in the Straits and the establishment of an international administration in Gaza. He thinks that the situation should be seen in its true light, as a great political victory. He went on to recommend a two-pronged approach: Israel will announce that it is embarking on the withdrawal and combined efforts will be made in Washington to strengthen the Americans in preparation for the pressure which will be brought to bear upon them by the Arabs.

The representatives of Australia, Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, Italy and Britain also spoke with the Israelis about the need to embark on implementation, starting with a meeting between Burns and Dayan.

Notes

1. See Editorial Note no. 490.
2. No. 481.
3. This paragraph specifically addresses the rights of Egypt in the Gaza Strip. See no. 462, note 1; see also *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 137, pp. 245–246.
4. On 1 March, before the General Assembly convened, Dulles summoned the diplomatic representatives of nine Arab countries, headed by the Egyptian ambassador, in order to give them explanations on the statements to be made by Israel and the United States at the Assembly. Dulles assured them that, despite rumours of a secret agreement between Israel and the United States, Israel's withdrawal would not entail any pledges or concessions on the part of the United States, and everything granted to Israel has already been published and is public knowledge (see *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 177, pp. 332–336; see also *The Political Battle*, p. 288).
5. The Dayan-Burns meeting which was to take place on 1 March was cancelled after Lodge's speech at the General Assembly. The government was supposed to set a new date for the meeting after receiving a report from Eban on his meeting with Dulles.

496. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 2 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA169; Inc.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Herzog provides Eban with guidelines for the talk with Dulles.

The government has discussed[1] Lodge's speech and Eban's telegram.[2] Dulles must be told that Israel made its statement at the General Assembly after Meir and Eban had read the announcement Lodge was to make, and the changes he had made to it had caused the government and the people of Israel embarrassment. The government is about to meet to finalise its position on the withdrawal.

The demands that should be made from Dulles are:

1) a clear pronouncement that Egypt will not return to the Gaza Strip.
2) recognition of Israel's right to self defence regarding both the Straits and Gaza. Lodge's speech contains no such recognition even though it was explicitly promised.
3) a commitment that no pressure will be exerted on Israel to carry out the measures proposed by the secretary-general in his report of 24 January 1957,[3] since the danger involved is that the secretary-general will make the non-return of Egypt to Gaza dependent on the stationing of a U.N. force on the Israeli side of the border, including Nitzana.

In addition, a demand should be made that all details of the agreement with the United States be confirmed in a letter to the prime minister, in an aide mémoire or in an agreement signed by both parties.[4]

Notes

1. For the first time in the history of Israel, the government held a meeting on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. The session was attended also by Ministers Burg and Shapira (of the religious Hapoel Hamizrachi-Hamizrachi party). See stenographic record of the government meeting of 2 March 1957, in file 77.0/9/33.
2. No. 495.
3. See Editorial Note no. 351.
4. In another telegram from Herzog to Eban of the same day it says: "If the secretary shows no signs of agreeing, perhaps it is worthwhile to hint to him or to someone at the State Department that if there is a crisis we may have no choice but expose the fact that there was deceit in the matter of the announcement" (Tel. TNWA172, 2 March 1957, 130.02/2459/15).

497. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 2 March 1957

Coded Tel. WNT299; Inc.: 130.02/2459/3

Summary

Eban reports on his talk with Dulles, also attended by Shiloah. He analysed Lodge's address and pointed out the deviations from the version agreed on. An argument ensued as to whether Lodge's words were really as dangerous as Eban described. With regard to the right to self defence, Dulles said that the United States, in its decision to take note of Israel's announcement, included all parts of the foreign minister's speech. As for the paragraph on using force to protect Israeli ships — Eban is authorised to tell the prime minister formally that the United States recognises the language appearing in the minister's speech, which it had helped formulate. Nonetheless, Dulles said that he was prepared to exchange documents or letters on the subject with the government of Israel through diplomatic channels.

With regard to the other issues mentioned by Eban, the United States sees no contradiction between what was said by Meir and what was said by Lodge, except on some non-vital matters which Lodge introduced because of the special sensitivity of the United Nations.

After consulting his advisors, Dulles proposed that Eisenhower write a letter to the prime minister saying that the expectations and hopes expressed by the foreign minister in the Assembly and echoed by others (i.e., France) are reasonable and the president assures Israel that the United States will seek their implementation. Eban achieved a few more improvements in the wording, and the version telegraphed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the best that could be achieved.[2]

Dulles telephoned the president and stressed that he wishes to help the prime minister. The decision Ben-Gurion had taken was not an easy one and he deserves a commitment from the president to ensure that the decision would bear fruit.

As for the rest of the talk:

a) They confirmed that Israel has the right of passage in the Canal and the Gulf; as soon as Israel evacuates Sharm el-Sheikh, UNEF will enter Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh, and this has nothing to do with any of Hammarskjöld's other arrangements.

b) U.S. policy is one of freedom of navigation in the Straits and an international regime in Gaza. Egypt does have legal rights but it must waive acting upon these rights. The United States has received a pledge on that matter, and therefore he thinks that there is no harm in expanding upon the quotation from the secretary-general's report.[3]

c) Dulles said that if they compare what is written in Pineau's original version (in part D) with what the United States said orally and declared via Lodge, Israel will see that it has no reason to feel disappointed.

Finally, Dulles said on behalf of the president that it is essential that the Burns-Dayan meeting take place and that it include a serious and practical discussion of the schedule of withdrawal. It is important that Dayan say that he is acting according to the announcement made by the minister of foreign affairs in the Assembly. Working under such an assumption, the United States will enlist many speakers who will speak in Israel's favour, and will attempt to wrap up the Assembly session at once. He implied that Eisenhower's public and solemn pledge is based on that assumption.

Notes

1. The telegram was not found.
2. See no. 498.
3. See Editorial Note no. 351.

498. Message from President Eisenhower (Washington) to Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion. 2 March 1957

Copy: 130.02/2459/13

499. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 2 March 1957

Coded Tel. WNT230; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Following Herzog's telegram,[1] Shiloah approached Bedell Smith and explained to him Israel's concern in view of the serious deviation in Lodge's speech from the version agreed upon. Shiloah asked what he can say to the prime minister on his behalf. Bedell Smith wished to contact the president so that he could convey an authorised message to the prime minister. Following Bedell Smith's talk with the president he sent the following message: "He is firm in his conviction that in spite of Lodge's speech there has been no last minute change in American policy and the president and the government of U.S.A. have undertaken a moral obligation which they definitely intend to fulfil. He is convinced that if Israel withdraws from both

places and trouble ensues the U.S.A. will stand by us faithfully. He has no reason to change his last message to the prime minister."

Notes

1. In this telegram Herzog urges Shiloah to approach Bedell Smith and ask the latter to obtain the president's opinion on Lodge's address at the General Assembly (see Herzog to Shiloah, TNW171, 2 March 1957, 130.02/2459/15).
2. See no. 453.

500. A. Eban (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion. 2 March 1957

Coded Tel. WIA262; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Eban says he is well aware of the trials Ben-Gurion is going through and the dangers involved. A great effort has been made to get the United States and Eisenhower personally to promise that the decision will be for the best. Eisenhower's pledge in his letter[1] binds him to Ben-Gurion in a mutual moral obligation, which is exactly what Bedell Smith referred to in his message.[2]

The decision must be made not only on the basis of practical security issues, but also on considerations of relations with the United States, which are the crux on which the security of the entire country hinges. Clearly, relations with France are also at stake, and Eban believes that accepting the arrangement with joint American-French support is in Israel's best interest. He implores Ben-Gurion to announce the implementation of the steps announced in Meir's speech, and thus place responsibility for the future on Eisenhower, as implied in his letter.

Eban enumerates the benefits Israel gained by its acceptance of the American plan:

Gulf of Aqaba

The U.S. declaration on the international nature of the Gulf and the Straits and the right of free passage there.

The certainty that other powers will join the above declaration.

The intent of the United States and other nations to sail their ships through the Straits of Tiran.

The announcement of Israel's right to protect its shipping, the wording of which was approved by the United States.

Stationing UNEF in the Straits.

Non-recall of UNEF without prior information to the General Assembly and the U.S. promise to approve UNEF's recall only if peaceful conditions prevail.

Gaza

The entry of UNEF to assume both civilian and military control.

Determining a transitional period from this entry until a final settlement, during which UNEF must remain in control.

The United States and others undertake moral responsibility for the non-return of Egypt to rule over Gaza.

The announcement by the United States and France that should the withdrawal from Gaza lead to trouble there, they consider themselves responsible for the situation.

Additional benefits:

Enlisting world public opinion about Israel's concerns and causing it to share concern and responsibility for its safety.

The frame of mind expressed by public opinion that Israel is defending itself and deserves assurances and arrangements to safeguard its security.

A wider understanding in the United Nations as well that Israel is in the right, four months after having been condemned as the aggressor.

A massive show of support for Israel in the American Congress and public.

Great pride of the Jewish people and other friends in Israel's military and political steadfastness.

Notes

1. No. 498.
2. See no. 453.

501. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2 March 1957

Coded Tel. WNT228; Inc.: 130.02/2459/3

Summary

Eban reports that Alphand, the French ambassador, called and said that Pineau rang him from Canada and wished to say, in his own name and that of Mollet, that despite all the difficulties involved they highly recommend not creating a new crisis in the wake of Lodge's speech. They believe that it is possible to receive a clarification from the State Department that will be acceptable to Israel. Eban read Alphand the U.S. president's message over the phone, and Alphand was surprised; the French did not think it possible to obtain such a declaration. Alphand urged once again for an immediate meeting to take place between Dayan and Burns, to dispel

any impression of a crisis and demonstrate that Israel is acting on the assumption that everything agreed upon between it and France and the United States is being maintained.

502. Editorial Note

The Government's Final Decision on Withdrawal despite the Threat to the Coalition (1–5 March 1957)

During the first four days of March the government of Israel met in four consecutive meetings in order to formulate the final decision on the withdrawal from Sinai and Gaza.

Already in the first session on 1 March, in which the government was to approve the text of the address to be given by the minister of foreign affairs in the U.N. Assembly, disagreements arose among the ministers. The ministers from the Achdut HaAvoda and Mapam parties objected to the proposed draft and even voted against it. Despite their objection, the proposed draft was approved by a majority of nine to four (see stenographic record of the government meeting, 1 March 1957, in file 77.0/9/33).

The next three government meetings were conducted under the threat of a double crisis: on the one hand the tension with the United States following Lodge's speech at the Assembly, which Israel considered as a breach of trust and a deviation from the agreement between Eban and Dulles; and on the other hand a developing crisis in the coalition because of the objections of ministers from Achdut HaAvoda and Mapam to a withdrawal under the circumstances. At the end of the session on 3 March, three proposals were put to a vote: Ben-Gurion's proposal — to consent to the withdrawal and reply to the president's message; Moshe Carmel's proposal — not to withdraw from the Gaza Strip or the Gulf until sufficient guarantees of freedom of navigation were ensured; Mordechai Bentov's proposal — to continue discussions with the United States and France about the difficulties created in the wake of Lodge's speech. Ben-Gurion's proposal was approved by a nine to four majority and the government decided to instruct the chief of staff to meet with General Burns and produce an agreed schedule for the withdrawal (see stenographic record of the government meeting, 3 March 1957, in file 77.0/9/33).

However, this did not resolve the crisis in the coalition. The national council of Achdut HaAvoda and the central committee of Mapam were about to convene on the evening of that day to decide on their final stand on the question of withdrawal, in preparation for the Knesset session scheduled for 4 March. In this session Ben-Gurion was to announce the most recent political developments which had led to the government's decision, and no-confidence motions were expected on

the withdrawal issue on the part of Herut, the General Zionists and the Israel Communist Party. In an attempt to prevent the crisis, Golda Meir sent an urgent telegram to the ministers of Achdut HaAvoda from New York, appealing to them personally: "After a great historical struggle in which Israel faced the entire world, let us not emerge divided among ourselves" (see Meir to Bar-Yehuda and Carmel, Tel. 584/173, 3 March 1957, 130.02/4549/3).

Ben-Gurion wished to make his statement in the Knesset before the U.N. Assembly resumed its session. But on the morning of 4 March discussions were still under way among the representatives of Mapai, Achdut HaAvoda and Mapam to reach an arrangement that would enable the leftist parties to express their stand while at the same time not voting against the government in a no-confidence vote which would lead to a crisis in the coalition. In the end, the Knesset session was postponed for one day (with the excuse of Ben-Gurion's ill-health). It was agreed between the coalition parties that the prime minister's statement would not be brought to a vote in the Knesset and the no-confidence motions tabled would be rejected by a vote of all coalition members. The government's final decision was approved by a majority vote in its session of 4 March in the afternoon.

Herzog promptly reported to the Israel mission in the United Nations: "The decision has been made and an hour ago the prime minister instructed Dayan to ask for a meeting with Burns today" (Tel. 177/25, 4 March 1957, 130.02/4549/3).

The General Assembly session scheduled for that same morning was postponed to the afternoon in the anticipation of a message confirming a Burns-Dayan meeting. And indeed, as the Assembly session opened, the minister of foreign affairs was able to announce, after a telephone conversation with Ben-Gurion, that on government instructions the chief of staff had met with Burns and reached full agreement on the details of the withdrawal of Israel's forces from Gaza and the Gulf of Aqaba and on arrangements for the entry of a U.N. force in their stead (GAOR 11th session, Plenary Meeting, 4 March 1957, pp. 1283–1286).

On 5 March, at the opening of the Knesset session, the prime minister announced the government's decision on the final withdrawal from Sinai and the Gaza Strip, explained the reasons and assessed the benefits gained from the war. The discussion of the announcement lasted until the following day, and ended with the vote on the three no-confidence motions which were rejected by a large majority. The rejection of those motions was an indirect endorsement of the government's announcement (see *Divrei HaKnesset* (Knesset Reports), Vol. XXII, 1956–1957, pp. 1233–1281).

503. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to G. Meir and A. Eban (New York). 3 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNW175; Outg.: 130.02/2459/3

Summary

Ben-Gurion reports that the tendency of the government is to accept the situation and that it will meet for a final summing up before the Knesset session. He asks Eban, in order to make it easier for the government to take the decision, to make a last-ditch effort to obtain a written clarification from Dulles on the issue of Israel's right to self defence both in the case of Gaza and the Gulf of Aqaba, based on his promise of an exchange of letters concerning the Straits.

It should be explained to Dulles that the government is about to meet to make a decision on its stand before the announcement in the Knesset and before the General Assembly convenes. At that time the Burns-Dayan meeting will also be decided upon, and should the decision be in the affirmative, such a meeting will be arranged at once.[4]

With all due respect to Dulles' words about Egypt's pledge not to return its forces, Ben-Gurion warns that ultimately the decision is in the hands of the U.N. secretary-general, who will be able to evade the American announcement by quoting the armistice agreement and several points made in Lodge's address.[5] Recognition by the United States on the matter of Gaza (provided it is not linked with the armistice agreement) may make it difficult for the secretary-general if he attempts to re-instate Egypt. Dulles should be told about the uproar in Israel on the Gaza issue and Eban should emphasise the need for U.S. support, even if it is secret, of Israel's right to self defence, also in order to enable the prime minister to recommend to the government to carry out the withdrawal.

Notes

1. The telegram has not been found. Perhaps the reference is to Tel.WNT299, see no. 497 above.
2. This telegram says: "Silver phoned and said he has sent or is sending you a telegram. Did not divulge its content. Said that in his opinion we must not allow disappointment over this or that wording to bring us to such an extreme or explosive a step as reneging on the promise made by the minister of foreign affairs in her announcement in the Assembly yesterday. That was before Eisenhower's message" (see Eban to Ben-Gurion and Herzog, WNT231, 2 March 1957, 130.02/2459/3).
3. No. 500.
4. See Editorial Note no. 502.
5. No. 496.

6. No. 498.
7. In his talk with Lawson, too, Ben-Gurion mentioned all the points raised in this telegram to Eban. See Lawson's account of the conversation, *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 183, pp. 348–350.

504. A. Eban (Washington) to D. Ben-Gurion. 3 March 1957

Coded Tel. WNT232; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Eban reports on his talk with Dulles. He explained Israel's wish to receive confirmation in writing of its statement on its right to self defence both in the Gulf and in Gaza, in the eventuality that the U.N. force will leave these locations and there will be a danger of Egypt's return. He also described the unrest in Israel and the need to calm public opinion. The knowledge that Israel has American support may influence Hammarskjöld to prevent any reversion to the earlier situation which could spell war.

Dulles replied that it would be very difficult for him to commit himself in writing to any matters which he would not like to see publicised. Additionally, there is no possibility of adding anything to the president's message[3] and Lodge's speech at the present time. He added that if there was anything unclear in Lodge's speech, this has already been rectified by the president's message.

The United States embraces the idea of continued U.N. responsibility for Gaza not only out of security considerations but also because it wishes to solve the refugee issue, for which it bears most of the burden, and this would not be possible should Egyptian control replace the U.N. administration.

After many pleas and pressure on Eban's part, Dulles promised to consult his advisors to see if some way out could be found. Later he telephoned and said that unfortunately he cannot add anything further regarding U.S. policy on Gaza because it has all been said already both in Lodge's speech and in the implications inherent in U.S. approval of the address made by the foreign minister.

To sum up Dulles' statements:

The commitment to exchange letters on the issue of the Straits of Tiran is still in effect. There is no contradiction here between the U.S. political aim and the legal situation.

With regard to Gaza he is obliged to turn down the request for a separate letter, due to legal considerations (Egypt's right to the Gaza Strip). However, the United States undertakes to do all in its power to put into practice Pineau's plan.

He suggests that Israel cast up the reckoning and believes that the balance will turn out to be neither negative nor negligible:

The 11 February aide mémoire recognises Israel's rightful claims on both issues.

In the Assembly the foreign minister had made her speech and the United States took note of her words and declared Israel's statements reasonable.

When it was explained that Lodge's speech had caused disappointment because of the weakness of the sympathy it showed for Israel's concerns and expectations, the president expressed the clearest sympathy for those concerns which the United States could possibly provide.

Dulles is most concerned about the situation that may develop in the Assembly and advises Israel to take steps immediately that will demonstrate Israel's intent to honour the commitments made by its foreign minister to the world. It is vital that the Burns-Dayan meeting take place before the Assembly convenes, and there is no exaggerating the importance of swift action on this matter; otherwise all the efforts made by all three governments may come to naught.

After this conversation the French ambassador telephoned Eban and said that Dulles had spoken to him along the same lines. Alphand believes that from an American legal point of view there could be no hope of acceding to Eban's request. Eisenhower's message and Dulles' oral comments, combined with the approval of the foreign minister's statement at the beginning of Lodge's address, all constitute, in Alphand's opinion, the maximum that could be obtained.

Mollet and Pineau are waiting for Israel's decision and pray that it is a positive one.

Notes

1. See no. 512, Appendix.
2. See Editorial Note no. 502.
3. No. 498.

505. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 3 March 1957

Uncoded Circ. Tel. 876; Outg.: 130.02/2459/3

Summary

Eytan informs the missions that in the Eban-Dulles talk of 2 March no fundamental clarification was achieved other than Dulles' statement that he is certain that Egypt will not return to Gaza.[1] However, as a consequence of the meeting, in which Eban complained bitterly of the deviations in Lodge's speech from what had been agreed,

Eisenhower sent a message to Ben-Gurion in which he congratulates him for the announcement made by Meir (see no. 498.)

The French announcement at the Assembly said that France sees as legal and reasonable Israel's assumptions on complete freedom of navigation in the Gulf, including its right to take any measures according to Article 51 of the U.N. Charter in order to ensure navigation should it be interfered with; it also sees as legal and reasonable Israel's assumption that after its withdrawal from Gaza the Strip will be under U.N. administration until peace is achieved. The representative of Costa Rica agreed with the French and American declarations.

Israel's representatives should contact their respective foreign ministries forthwith, report on the statement made by the minister of foreign affairs at the Assembly and say that it is presumed that the Israeli government will decide on the implementation of the statement and on a meeting to take place at once between Dayan and Burns.

Israel asks that instructions be given immediately to missions of friendly countries at the United Nations to do the following: express their appreciation of Israel's stance in the Assembly; join the United States, France and Costa Rica in pronouncing the Gulf and the Straits to be international waterways; announce that they confirm Israel's assumption, supported by France and the United States, that Gaza will remain under complete U.N. control, both military and civilian, until the establishment of peace or a settlement between Israel and Egypt on the matter of the Gaza Strip.

These countries must understand, as does the United States, that any interference with freedom of navigation, or the return of Egypt to the Strip, mean a new conflagration in the area with untold consequences; therefore it is their moral obligation to take a clear and decisive stance in the Assembly, which would persuade Egypt not even to think of attempting to revert to the earlier situation.

Note

1. No. 497.

506. M. Touval (Budapest) to the Director of the East European Division. 3 March 1957

Original: 130.23/3101/28

Summary

Touval describes the situation in Hungary after the uprising and reports on emigration matters and the attitude towards Israel. The number of immigrants to Israel from Hungary keeps growing and he expects to see some 1,000 immigrants leaving Hungary in March as well as in the months to come. At the same time, many were refused their application for a passport, particularly young people or those with vital professions. As agreed between Touval and Szarka, the deputy minister of foreign affairs, Israel would provide him with a list of those refused passports and he would see to it that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would intervene on their behalf.

A positive step on the part of Hungary was the appointment of a new minister and his quick dispatch to Israel. Clearly in the present political and international state, with the U.N. not recognising their mission's credentials, it is of great importance to them that their minister can present his credentials in Israel.

The broadcasts on Hungarian radio and the articles in the press have become more objective and nearly every day the speeches of Ben-Gurion, Meir and Eban were also published. (The Arab position was also forcefully represented in the press and on the air.)

Alongside the above positive description there are also some negative aspects. Despite promises made by the head of protocol and his offer to issue a letter on establishing *Tahal* (Overseas Wireless Stations), no reply has yet arrived.

There are also rumours, originating with the heads of the Passport Department, that the Hungarian government intends to stop issuing passports for emigration purposes. Touval treats these rumours with some scepticism, though the matter is worrying.

Notes

1. The first paragraph of the letter, omitted here, is devoted to a description of the political situation in Hungary after the crushing of the uprising.
2. Ivan Kallo was appointed special envoy and minister plenipotentiary of Hungary in Israel in February 1957.
3. Overseas Wireless Stations, the Foreign Ministry's wireless network.
4. The paragraph omitted deals with personal matters of employees in the Israel legation.

507. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 4 March 1957

Coded Tel. NWT331; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Eban explains several points in preparation for the debate in the Knesset.

The assumptions expressed in the speech of the minister of foreign affairs are officially binding on the government of Israel. However, morally they are also binding on other governments including the United States. Emphasis should be placed on the fact that those who demanded the withdrawal have in effect undertaken the heavy responsibility of preventing a blockade in the Gulf of Aqaba and attacks from Gaza. Only time will tell if they will live up to that responsibility, but it exists all the same.

With regard to the Gulf, the objectives achieved are clear and include a better guarantee of free passage and actual use of that freedom by the maritime powers than Israel could have achieved by staying in Sharm el-Sheikh. With regard to the right to self defence in the Straits, it may be said openly that major governments knew of Israel's announcement at the Assembly in advance. No mention must be made of the pledge to exchange notes.

From a formal and moral standpoint, the "taking note" in the speech by the U.S. representative covers all parts of the foreign minister's address and all the declarations contained in it. The same is true of the definition in Eisenhower's message which declares Israel's expectations to be "reasonable."[1] Despite all the difficulties which arose along the way, Israel must express its gratitude to the United States for making the effort to break the stalemate, for being the first to declare the open nature of the Gulf of Aqaba and the freedom of navigation in it and for undertaking the moral responsibility expressed in Eisenhower's message. In addition, France's contribution should be highlighted, not only its support of Israel during its isolation but also its initiative in the later stages.

Note

1. No. 498.

508. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 4 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNW180: Outg.: 130.09/2339/15

Summary

Tekoah describes measures which have been proposed to the prime minister and to the chief of staff in order to transfer the administration of the Gaza Strip exclusively into the hands of the United Nations while preventing any intrusion, whether overt or covert, of Egyptian influence or control.

The evacuation is to be accomplished in several stages:

The evacuation of IDF units and entry of UNEF units. Guarding the Rafah border will remain in IDF hands until the completion of such measures as would ensure effective closure of the border against Egyptian infiltration.

Gradual handing over of Israeli administration to U.N. personnel while taking strict care not to hire or let in any Egyptian personnel or local clerks who may be acting on behalf of Egypt.

Once the IDF has withdrawn, the police will assume responsibility for the safety of the Israeli administration and will be pulled out only after it is assured of the following: that the U.N. force can take effective measures to prevent a regrouping of Fedaiyun; that communication procedures are established to ensure cooperation with Israel against Fedaiyun operations; that effective measures are taken to prevent illegal passage from the Strip to Israel. During the transfer of authority, steps must be taken to ensure that the Gaza Strip is not incorporated into Egypt in any way, including:

No economic integration between Egypt and the Strip;

No direct transportation or traffic between the Strip and Egypt;

No political, economic or social activity of any Egyptian agencies or bodies, either overt nor covert, will be allowed;

No Egyptians will be allowed into the Strip in any position or capacity;

No anti-Israeli propaganda or incitement in writing will be allowed; no distribution of Egyptian propaganda material, no raising of the Egyptian flag, use of pictures of Egyptian leaders, and so on.

During the process of transferring the civil administration and until the new arrangements are in place, the connection with Israel must be maintained in terms of economic ties, marketing, supplies, post and telegraph services, transportation and traffic, currency and customs, water supply, and so on.

UNRWA will continue to enjoy all facilities as it has done heretofore.

The transfer of authority from Israel to the United Nations from a legal standpoint will be made by the military commander issuing an appropriate order.

Tekoah has no illusions as to the chances of achieving all the above.

509. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 5 March 1957

Coded Tel. YA544; Outg.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Ben-Gurion informs the minister of foreign affairs that Isser Harel has sent him word that in two weeks' time Hammarskjöld intends to withdraw UNEF from the Gaza Strip and let in the Egyptians. The secretary-general informed Burns of the same.

Ben-Gurion asks that Meir meet with Dulles immediately and let him know that Israel has this information from the most reliable sources. She must make it clear to him that such a development means either the cancellation of the Israeli withdrawal or the renewal of hostilities within two weeks. Though Israel was embarrassed by Lodge's speech, it relied on the assurances of the president and the commitment of the secretary of state, but it seems that the secretary-general is bent on thwarting the arrangement that was reached.

Meir must demand that the secretary-general rescind his instruction to Burns.

Notes

1. Isser Harel, head of the *Mossad*, the Central Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations, and of the General Security Service.
2. Raphael Medan, the press officer in the Israel delegation to the U.N.

510. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 5 March 1957

Coded Tel. XA598; Outg.:93.01/2186/3

Summary

Eban reports that he met with Hammarskjöld, told him that Ben-Gurion had received information that he is planning to pull UNEF out of Gaza in two weeks' time and let in Egypt,[1] and requested an explanation.

Hammarskjöld replied as follows:

Such information is totally groundless. He has no such plan, either to pull out UNEF or to send anyone else in its stead. What he intends is that UNEF should undertake military and civilian control of Gaza for the initial period.

He does not know how long this initial period will last or what is to follow it. At first he thought that the period of military rule would be brief, but it seems it may have to be somewhat longer, since no one yet knows what will follow.

Various bodies are proposing ambiguous proposals recommending long-term international administration, but offer no solution to the legal difficulties.

He refuses to deny the above rumour publicly since he sees it as groundless. In any case, he has learned precisely where Israel stands on the issue.

Note

1. See no. 509.

511. A. Eban (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 5 March 1957

Coded Tel. XA597; Outg.: 93.01/2188/9

Summary

In talks held by Meir and Eban with Hammarskjöld and others, they looked into the report that UNEF will be pulled out of Gaza and concluded that there is no intention of such a withdrawal in two weeks' time, nor was there any specific mention of letting in Egyptian forces in its stead. The problem as Eban sees it is as follows:

It is agreed and accepted that UNEF is to enter Gaza and assume all military and civilian responsibilities for the initial period. The administration during that period will be completely military. However, there is disagreement as to the follow-up period: Hammarskjöld claims that he must prepare an international civilian administration that would replace the military one, and for this purpose he must negotiate with Egypt. If he receives Egypt's approval, so much the better, but if he does not, he will approach the General Assembly. Other representatives at the Assembly believe that it is enough to let UNEF enter Gaza and extend the initial period for as long as possible. All agree that this period constitutes an exclusively U.N. administration. During that same time an international civilian administration would be set up, based on extending the responsibilities of UNRWA. This position is supported by Canada, Norway and apparently also the United States.

The foreign minister told Hammarskjöld that a change in the situation in Gaza after the entry of UNEF would mean that Israel would reserve the right to defend itself, as she had said in her speech.

Eban adds that Israel must act promptly through all available channels to induce the United States to halt Hammarskjöld's actions and make sure that he only brings UNEF into Gaza but does not embark on any negotiations with Egypt.

Eban has already contacted the State Department and they have promised to take action.

Notes

1. Hammarskjöld's message to Burns, see no. 509.
2. No. 493.
3. See no. 504.
4. See no. 481.

512. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to J. Tsur (Paris). 5 March 1957

Orig.: 93.02/204/18

Summary

Eytan relays to Tsur a message from Pineau. The initiative for this message came from Eytan, who told Ambassador Gilbert that a public statement by Mollet or Pineau to the effect that they had initiated the plan for the withdrawal from Gaza would make the prime minister's situation on the home front easier. Gilbert understood immediately and sent a telegram to Pineau in Ottawa. Pineau's reply, translated into Hebrew, appears as an appendix to the document in the Main Volume, to the following effect:

The government of France cannot openly declare its initiative as requested in Gilbert's telegram. Even though the initiative for the solution was the compromise proposed by France, the final formulation of the solution as made by the United States is a far cry from that proposed by France. However, considering that Ben-Gurion is in a difficult position, and since France would like to help him through this period of crisis in Israel, Pineau is willing to send him a personal message. This message would say that the address made by Georges-Picot at the U.N. Assembly on 1 March expresses some of the ideas proposed by Pineau in his talks with Dulles aimed at resolving the Gulf of Aqaba and Gaza Strip problems.

In addition, and in order to make France's stand perfectly clear, Pineau sent Dulles on 3 March a message including France's interpretation of Article 1c in the statement made by Meir at the United Nations, as follows:

The U.N. will take exclusive responsibility for the military and civil administration of the Gaza region, until a peace treaty is signed or until a final settlement regarding this region is reached.

Should this responsibility be given, fully or partially, by the U.N. to Egypt — an eventuality which France and the United States must do all in their power to prevent — Israel will be entitled to act to defend its rights as mentioned in Article 1c in Meir's declaration.

513. M. Comay (New York) to the Director of the International Organizations Division. 5 March 1957

Orig.: 130.03/1898/5

Summary

Comay reports on the discussion of the refugee problem in the Political Committee of the United Nations on 21 February.[1] In his speech to the committee, Comay reiterated Israel's earlier policy lines: the non-return of the refugees, their absorption into Arab countries and payment of compensation once the Arab boycott on Israel is lifted. However he exempted the Gaza refugees from these general guidelines and said that in their case Israel is willing to consider agreeing to the return of some of them and paying compensation to others,[2] regardless of the boycott. After discussion, the committee adopted the American draft proposal.

Israel supported this resolution, and Comay elaborates on the reasons for this:

The resolution is a positive and realistic one, compared to previous resolutions in recent years.

The resolution confirmed the temporary cooperation between UNRWA and the Israeli authorities in the Gaza Strip.

It was advisable, in terms of Israel's moral standing at the General Assembly and in the midst of a political struggle, to support UNRWA as a humanitarian organisation with which Israel cooperates.

It was not advisable for Israel to isolate itself on a matter which was unanimously approved.

Notes

1. The Political Committee of the United Nations discussed the refugee issue on 21 February and adopted a resolution authorising the director of UNRWA to send governments in the region funds from the Rehabilitation Fund for development purposes, provided that these governments undertake responsibility for rehabilitating a suitable number of refugees. In this resolution, the Assembly's earlier resolutions on the issue of refugees were confirmed; furthermore, it was stated that the refugees had not been resettled in their places of residence, they had not been given compensation nor had any progress been made in their rehabilitation. Israel voted in favour of this resolution and even

considered it an improvement over earlier ones, since it recognised the need to resettle the refugees in other countries (see Sidor to the Information Division, 27 February 1957, 130.03/1989/5).

2. Israel's proposal to take in some of the Gaza refugees was linked to an Israeli civil administration remaining in the Strip, which would make for a period of calm and development in the region. Due to the expected withdrawal this proposal was withdrawn. Shiloah commented: "With reference to the refugees I suggest that we write that the security risk posed by taking in the refugees was smaller than the risk of returning the Strip; but now that we have agreed to the bigger risk, we cannot be expected to undertake the smaller risk as well" (see note in Shiloah's handwriting on the report of Arad's talks at the State Department, 5 March 1957, 130.23/3088/5).

514. G. Meir (New York) to D. Ben-Gurion. 6 March 1957

Coded Tel. 599; Inc.: 130.02/2459/3

Summary

Meir sends Ben-Gurion her opinion on the Hammarskjöld document.[1] Though one cannot ignore Hammarskjöld's basic intentions, still, it does not say things explicitly. Her conclusion is that they should not let the United States shirk the responsibility it has undertaken even for a moment.

Meir also mentions Dulles' appearance at a press conference and some of his answers which were not satisfactory.[2] It is difficult to tell precisely what he had in mind, whether he is living up to his reputation and not adhering to the whole truth or whether he is trying to assuage the Arabs publicly while reassuring Israel in private. That goes for Gaza. As for the Straits, he was all right. She feels very worried but in her opinion Israel has no choice.

She said explicitly, both in a press conference[3] and to Hammarskjöld, that anyone who is interested in peace in the region must see to it that Egyptian rule is not restored in Gaza in any shape or form. This is Israel's interpretation of her statement at the General Assembly. She has no doubt that this perspective will deter Hammarskjöld from letting Egypt into Gaza.

Notes

1. Hammarskjöld's instructions to Burns, see nos. 509, 511. Eban's attitude on this issue was even more moderate. A telegram sent to Ben-Gurion that very day reads: "I do not consider Hammarskjöld's document as a reason for changing the government's decision. There is nothing new in the fact that Hammarskjöld supports making an effort to secure Egypt's agreement to the international civil administration which is to be set up after UNEF takes charge; and in the fact that other powers suggest that he should put in

UNEF but not plan any additional measures. Even Hammarskjöld does not wish for a war that may ensue should Egypt really enter in two weeks' time [...] The situation is quite complex and we will always have crises on our hands, but there is no reason to rush into one today" (Eban to Ben-Gurion, Tel. 600, 6 March 1957, 130.02/2459/3).

2. In a press conference on 5 March, Dulles denied that there were any secret pledges to Israel, and declared that Lodge's statement at the U.N. General Assembly on the issue of Gaza fully and truthfully reflected U.S. policy on the future of the Strip. In response to a question by an Israeli correspondent as to whether the president's words apply to the hope expressed by the Israeli minister of foreign affairs that Egypt would not return to Gaza, Dulles said that the president's message (no. 498) referred in general terms to hopes and expectations of a better future for the Middle East.
3. The press conference took place at the U.N. Centre on 5 March. Meir announced on that occasion that Egypt had forfeited its rights in the armistice agreement due to its attacks on Israel, and that the agreement was no longer in existence (see also *The Political Battle*, p. 310).

515. G. Rafael (New York) to J. Herzog. 6 March 1957

Coded Tel. XA601; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Engen, the Norwegian member of the Advisory Committee,[1] asked to speak to Eban and Rafael before leaving for Cairo with Hammarskjöld. He said that the main purpose of their visit was to discuss the issue of Suez, but they may also discuss arrangements for Gaza. Eban and Rafael objected to raising the issue in Cairo and claimed that any discussion of this subject at this stage may lead to confusing the Gaza and the Suez issues and enable Nasser to employ extortion with regard to both Suez and Gaza. Engen agreed with this evaluation.

As for the possibility of Egypt's return, Engen claimed that the policy of his government is to oppose it, and that the secretary-general is of the same opinion. However there is a legal problem which is giving food for thought to the secretary-general and other representatives. The general tendency in the United Nations is to establish a full international administration in Gaza, but there are some who think that Egypt should be given a token presence. Eban and Rafael forcefully objected to any form of Egyptian presence in Gaza.

In response to their question what the secretary-general's position will be when Nasser demands the reinstating of Egypt or participation in the U.N. administration, Engen said that the secretary-general would refuse such a demand, and, should Nasser insist, the former would apply to the General Assembly before consenting to any change. Engen also agreed with their opinion that no limit should be placed on the "initial period," thus eliminating the question of Egypt's return to Gaza. The

secretary-general, too, is interested in an exclusively U.N. administration which would handle all responsibilities described in his statement of 22 February.[2] At the end of this conversation the Israelis warned that should Egypt be allowed to return, Israel would exercise its right to self-defence as defined in Pineau's message to the prime minister.[3]

Notes

1. Hans Engen, Norway's permanent representative to the United Nations.
2. See no. 462, note 1.
3. See no. 512, Appendix.

516. G. Meir to J.F. Dulles (Washington), 6 March 1957

Copy: 130.02/2448/06

Notes

1. The reference is probably to the phone conversation between Dulles and Shiloah which took place on 4 March. In this conversation, Dulles expressed his satisfaction with Israel's decision to withdraw, and said that the United States wished to do the right and proper thing (see *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 200, p. 377).
2. No. 498.
3. See nos. 495, 497.

517. Y. Meroz (Washington) to the United States Division. 6 March 1957

Copy: 130.23/30"8/9

Summary

Meroz analyses the factors contributing to pro-Israel sentiment in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

A considerable part of the support for Israel came from a fully-fledged movement for Israel, which incorporates not only its supporters but also important circles with other personal or partisan interests.

Meroz enumerates five main groups of supporters:

Traditional supporters of Israel (i.e., liberals, "Righteous Gentiles," etc.), most of whom are from East Coast states;

Representatives of the "Jewish vote";

Those opposed to the discriminatory attitude towards Israel, based on anti-Soviet sentiments (led by Knowland and Bridges);

Die-hard anti-U.N. isolationists, mainly from the Mid-West but also from the South;

The anti-Nasser "Cotton States," mainly from the Deep South.

To these may be added the dyed-in-the-wool opposition who take pleasure in any opportunity to cross swords with the Administration. This "coalition" was very strong, yet its composition indicates that it cannot be relied on under all circumstances. On the contrary, it may be assumed that, to the extent that the support of Israel is based on a negation of or opposition to something else, it may not last for very long. However, for the time being, it serves as a great support for Israel and has had a decisive impact on the state's struggle.

518. E. Ben-Horin (Jerusalem) to A. Lourie. 6 March 1957

Aide mémoire: 130.23/3093/23

Summary

1. At the beginning of the crisis, the initial reactions from Asia led to the fear that, in political terms, Israel had lost the support of most of that continent for a long time. This was also the impression of the mission at the United Nations until the end of the first part of the session of the Assembly. These fears turned out to be exaggerated. As time went by and the threat of an impending world war subsided, things calmed down in various Asian capitals, and there was time to look at the crisis with fresh eyes, in a matter-of-fact way, according to the direct interest of each country.
2. It is true that in some of the countries in the Asian bloc the interests of Israel were badly damaged for a long period; in other countries they were only slightly damaged, in a transitory and superficial way, while there are others in which these interests suffered no damage at all.
3. The main damage is to be seen in neutral countries such as India, Ceylon and Burma, that is, specifically in countries which some Israelis had considered as likely to save Israel. His clear opinion is that in Burma there is a genuine and serious crisis of confidence.
4. On the other hand, there is little damage — and at times even rays of hope — in pro-Western countries such as Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, Liberia, and of course countries that have reason to fear a strong Egypt, such as Persia and Ethiopia.

5. On occasions when the Asian bloc has to appear as a unified bloc, it may not always be possible to discern the more accommodating position of these countries, due to "bloc" considerations and caution. But first signs are becoming apparent that this bloc, which is in any case divided on major international issues, no longer maintains an automatic, routine uniformity on Middle East issues. It may be difficult to prove, but his impression is that the countries enumerated in paragraph 4 above, or at least some of them, prevented a uniform and extreme stand by the bloc in recent debates at the U.N., thus sparing Israel unnecessary problems, also because the United States did not face a completely united and cohesive bloc. Therefore in hindsight Israel was totally justified in concentrating its efforts during the weeks of the crisis on those capitals.
6. It is true that inter-socialist relations are among Israel's major assets in relations with various countries in Asia. But even in that respect, it is easier for Israel to deal with the right wing of these movements. Both in Japan and in India, the left wingers are more hostile than ever before.
7. The latest crisis in particular has demonstrated that it is not only necessary to invest efforts on both continents, but also worthwhile. Political lobbying, adapted to local needs, has its effect, contrary to the defeatist views that are sometimes voiced.
8. Without neglecting the more difficult parts of Asia and Africa, a special and speedy effort is essential to acquire or strengthen a foothold in the pro-Western countries. For this purpose it is mandatory swiftly to overcome budgetary hesitations which are preventing the setting up of legations in Manila, Bangkok, and perhaps Monrovia.
9. It would also be justified, despite the difficulties involved, to make an effort to increase the special budget for activities in Asia and Africa which had been reduced. The Asian and African Division has several plans on worthwhile ways of spending these funds.
10. It will be necessary, of course, to build up a commercial interest in various Asian and African countries with the opening of the Gulf of Aqaba. Any assistance that Bartur can receive on this matter would be well worthwhile.

519. M. Comay (New York) to the International Organizations Division. 6 March 1957

Coded Tel. XA604; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Comay reports on a talk with Labouisse on continued cooperation between Israel and UNRWA on supplying provisions to the Gaza Strip. Labouisse complained about the unrealistic approach of the secretary-general and the U.N. secretariat to the problems in Gaza. He mentioned the following problems, among others:

The question of provisions, which has been solved for the time being.

He warned that Israeli forces should not be pulled out until after the deployment of UNEF, otherwise it will not be possible to prevent riots and looting.

He emphasised the need for a central civilian administration which will see to normal routine and all services, but it seems that the secretariat has no idea how to go about it. Labouisse is prepared to have UNRWA undertake responsibility for certain services such as hospitals and schools for the local residents, but only on condition that he receives the additional funding required. It seems that the secretary-general does not know where these funds are to come from.

Quite early on he warned the secretary-general and others, including Pearson, that UNEF troops would not be able to control the refugees and the population, and that no matter who is in charge it may become necessary to shoot at and even kill Arabs.

Economic and financial issues such as the mixture of Egyptian and Israeli currency.

He is convinced that some Israelis were under the illusion that they would be able to remain in the Strip, keep the peace and achieve the cooperation of the local population. However, after a longer period severe problems would have arisen, and Israel is doing itself a favour by extricating itself from the mess.

Note

1. In this telegram, Comay was asked to discuss with Henry Labouisse, the director of UNRWA, the organisation's continued cooperation with Israel on supplying food to the population of the Strip. The telegram ended with the following: "UNRWA officials prefer to continue working with us rather than going back to the problems they had with the Egyptians, while for us it is important to carry on serving as a channel for supplying two-thirds of the Strip residents. We are prepared to reach an agreement with UNRWA on this matter" (see the International Organizations division to Comay, YA551, 5 March 1957, 93.01/2186/3).

520. Message from Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower (Washington). 7 March 1957

Copy: 130.02/2448/6

Notes

1. No. 79.
2. On the night between 6–7 March all IDF units and all Israeli administrative personnel were evacuated from the Gaza Strip, and control of the Strip was handed over to UNEF. On 8 March a U.N. force entered Sharm el-Sheikh, and the evacuation of the Gulf of Aqaba ended on the 12th of that month.
3. No. 498.

521. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan and the West European Division. 7 March 1957

Coded Tel. 796; Outg.: 93.02/328/15

Summary

Tsur reports that in his talk with Joxe the latter said that Hammarskjöld had reached the conclusion that the status quo in Gaza and in the Straits should be maintained, that is, keeping the U.N. force there without attempting to reach a solution in principle. Therefore he will announce the withdrawal of the IDF and the entry of the U.N. force at the General Assembly, but will not touch upon issues pertaining to the future.

The secretary-general has decided to postpone his trip to Cairo.[2] The French government received this news with satisfaction, since it was concerned that Egypt might influence him.

The Suez problem is far from a solution. Egypt has not yet agreed to finish clearing the Canal, and the direction of negotiations concerning temporary control is unclear. There will be no solution so long as the U.N. does not act firmly, and so far Washington shows no willingness to do so.

The issue of the Eilat pipeline was not explicitly discussed in their talks in Washington, but it was touched upon unofficially. The American reaction was that there is no point to this pipeline, since the Canal will open soon. According to Joxe, this will not affect the French government, which is firm in its decision to take steps towards putting the plan into action. Tsur proposed to set up

a committee to study the problem and for negotiations once Eshkol arrives.[3] Joxe promised to push the matter forward but noted that difficulties still abound.

Joxe too insisted vehemently that France exerted no pressure of any sort, at any time, on the government of Israel to accept the compromise plan.[4] It seems that the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs was offended by the hints to that effect which appeared in the Israeli press and wishes to dispel that impression.

Notes

1. See no. 511.
2. See no. 515.
3. See no. 576, note 1.
4. See no. 512, Appendix.

522. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Bartur. 7 March 1957

Copy: 93.02/205/5

Summary

Tsur met with Jules Moch in order to obtain his support for the pipeline plan. It would be very important if he could see Minister of Finance Ramadier, since it is the obstinacy of the latter that is holding up progress on the matter. Despite his many talks with most ministers and the considerable advance made in discussion with the officials, Tsur has not managed to budge the negotiations from their standstill.

Tsur hopes to see Mollet and Pineau soon and renew his assault, but the way things look now, the French government is in need of divine assistance. Despite Mollet's success in the United States, his government is in danger and he may fall.

The matter of the pipeline is high on Tsur's list of concerns and he is taking every opportunity to push for a decision, but he does not believe that the plan will come to fruition without the overt or covert support of the United States or Britain.

Notes

1. See Bartur to Tsur, 27 February 1957, 93.02/205/5, referring to the visit to Israel of Moch, a member of the leadership of the French Socialist party (see no. 432, note 4). In this letter Bartur wrote: "Jules Moch is fully convinced of the vital importance of building a 16-inch pipeline as soon as possible. He has no doubt concerning the freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and has promised to do all in his power to influence Ramadier. He is also convinced that it is necessary to establish an inter-ministerial group

for immediate negotiations on the pipeline and on the other matters, as this is the only way to overcome obstacles and make speedy progress, considering the cumbersome French bureaucracy."

2. See no. 467.

523. F.E. Shinnar (Cologne) to W. Eytan. 7 March 1957

Coded Tel. 153; Inc.: 130.09/2354/4

Summary

Shinnar reports on his talk with Hallstein. He expressed Israel's gratitude for the stand taken by the Bonn government during Israel's struggle in the United Nations.

Later in the conversation the two discussed the chances and conditions for establishing diplomatic relations between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany. Shinnar expressed his opinion that the present time is most suitable for Germany to determine its stand, since it could be seen as a wish to provide Israel with moral compensation in addition to the reparations which serve as material compensation.

Hallstein replied that Israel must wait for an appropriate time for the establishment of relations, which would not unduly strain their foreign policy. He argued that by continuing to carry out the reparations agreement and rejecting any attempts to influence it, Germany is demonstrating its attitude to Israel in a manner which far exceeds the immediate value of diplomatic relations.

In conclusion, Shinnar told him about the pipeline plan. Hallstein was enthusiastic and requested further details.

Notes

1. Walter Hallstein, secretary of state for foreign affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany.
2. See Vol. 11, no. 247.
3. See Shinnar to the minister of foreign affairs and Eytan, Tel. 114, 8 February 1957, 130.23/3099/25.
4. The telegram is in file 130.02/2459/6.

524. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 8 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA183; Inc.: 130.02/2459/13

Summary

The United States division reports on Ben-Gurion's talk with Lawson. The prime minister gave Lawson his reply to President Eisenhower's message.[1]

He added that on the strength of the president's statements[2] as well of those of the secretary, and based on Israel's retaining its right to self defence, he sees a considerable chance that freedom of navigation in the Straits will indeed be maintained. However he is concerned about Gaza. He cannot accept Lodge's claim that Egypt has rights in the Strip, since Egypt's repeated violations of the armistice agreement over the past eight years have cancelled its validity, and Israel refuses to conduct negotiations based on that agreement. The entry of the United Nations into Gaza may serve as a smokescreen for the return of Egypt, and the Fedaiyun may resume their activity. The prime minister had determined his position in light of the president's message.[3] When deciding on withdrawal, he knew very well what a serious historical responsibility he was taking on himself. Even though the president did not promise in so many words that Egypt would not be allowed back into Gaza, the secretary of state did promise Eban that the United States would do everything possible to prevent it;[4] he hopes that the president's words that Israel will have no cause to regret its withdrawal will come to pass.

In closing, the prime minister described the plans for the development of Eilat and for laying railway tracks, roads and an oil pipeline from Eilat to the Mediterranean. He expressed his hope that American ships and tankers would dock in Eilat. He noted that the American sanctions had actually been in effect since 30 October 1956,[5] expressed the hope that American aid would be renewed and specifically mentioned the loan from the Export-Import Bank.

In reply to Lawson's questions about erecting a physical barrier between the Gaza Strip and Israel the prime minister said that he had assigned to the General Staff the task of preparing a plan for ensuring the safety of the Negev settlements, including a barrier.

Lawson said that he wished to congratulate the prime minister personally for his statesmanship, as shown both in his firm stand and his decisions, throughout the months of the struggle and its conclusion. The prime minister replied that his decision constituted an act of faith, and history will judge whether he was right.

Notes

1. No. 520. Compare Lawson's report on his meeting with Ben-Gurion, *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 204, pp. 383–385.
2. In a press conference on 7 March Eisenhower declared that the United States sees the Gulf of Aqaba and the Straits as a free international waterway so long as the International Court at The Hague did not rule otherwise, and that it is prepared to use it together with other countries.
3. No. 498.
4. See no. 504.
5. See no. 25, note 1.

525. M. Alon (Ankara) to W. Eytan. 8 March 1957

Copy: 93.18/267/6

Summary

Alon summarises the steps taken to prepare the ground for the renewal of full relations between Turkey and Israel. The key is in the hands of Turkish Prime Minister Menderes. Therefore all efforts should be directed towards persons or parties who have direct influence on him and who would be willing and able to take such a step. The only person whom Israel considers a possibility is Birgi,[2] but at the beginning of April he is to take up his appointment as ambassador to London. Therefore Alon will try to see him before his successor assumes office.

In a talk with Dikerdem[2] of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Alon touched upon the subject informally. Dikerdem responded that in his view it is too early to raise the problem officially, since Turkey has announced that its minister would not return until a final solution to the problem of Palestine is achieved. He did, however, express willingness to send out feelers and report his findings soon.

Alon also consulted with Pietromarchi who expressed his view that in the current situation there is no chance of receiving an affirmative answer. On the other hand he advised Israel not to give up but to raise the problem with the Turkish government in a subtle and proper fashion — by means of contacts between Eliahu Sasson and Prime Minister Menderes, who thinks highly of him and respects him.

Alon thinks that action by the United States is imperative. Without it, it is doubtful if Israel will succeed at this stage. He considered meeting with the U.S. ambassador in Ankara after asking for Eytan's approval, but then changed his mind since he is convinced that the ambassador would not take any action without instructions from Washington.

Notes

1. The telegram was not found.
2. Mehmet Dikerdem, director of the Middle East Department, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3. In the letter Alon gave an account of the Arab summit conference held in Cairo between 25–27 March and of the disagreement among the participants (see Alon to the West European division, 8 March 1957, 93.18/267/6).

   The conference was attended by the rulers and prime ministers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan. Among the subjects discussed were the implications for their countries of the visit of King Saud to the United States and the forthcoming approval of the Eisenhower Doctrine for the Middle East. Despite King Saud's support for the U.S. plan, Syria and Egypt held firm in their opposition to it. The joint declaration issued at the conclusion of the conference dealt with Israel and the results of the war, and called for the immediate evacuation of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza Strip and for the payment of compensation to Egypt for damage caused in the attacks on it. The Eisenhower Doctrine was not mentioned at all, except to say that the participants had decided to take a stand of "positive neutrality."

526. Editorial Note

The Conclusion of the U.N. General Assembly Session (8 March 1957)

Four months after it had convened during the Sinai Campaign, the U.N. General Assembly came to an end without adopting any further resolution on the Middle East. The debates at the Assembly focused on the secretary-general's report on the implementation of the Assembly's resolutions of 2 February (see Editorial Note no. 366). In the first part of the report Hammarskjöld reported on the IDF's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and from Sharm el-Sheikh and the entry of UNEF. The second part dealt with ways of implementing the Assembly's second resolution of 2 February on creating conditions for peace in the region. Hammarskjöld stated that henceforward he would act to that end, in consultation with the parties involved. Here he made it quite clear that the resolution committed both Israel and Egypt to honour the armistice agreement and consent to the stationing of the U.N. force on the armistice demarcation line.

The third part of the report stated that initially UNEF would receive exclusive military and civilian control of Gaza. The secretary-general also addressed questions such as financial and organisational matters that emerged in the context of UNRWA activities in the area. Finally he announced that the Truce Supervision Organisation was subordinate to UNEF operational supervision, with coordination between the two bodies. (The report is in file 130.02/2459/13.)

A discussion was then held in the Assembly in which representatives of the United States, Denmark, Canada, Burma, Indonesia, Czechoslovakia and Egypt took part. Eban, who also spoke, again stressed Israel's considerations and motives in waging the Sinai Campaign, and its stand on freedom of navigation and the Gaza Strip and opposition to the state of belligerency (see *The Political Battle*, pp. 313–314). The Assembly then adjourned.

527. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 9 March 1957

Coded Tel. WIA277; Outg.: 93.01/2214/4

Summary

Eban reports on his talk with Herter[1] and his advisors, also attended by Shiloah. He handed over the note from the minister of foreign affairs to Dulles,[2] and Herter read it to those present.

Eban wished to know whether and how the United States intends to exercise the right to free passage in the Gulf of Aqaba in the near future, and added that the government of Israel would consider the beginning of such a process as an encouraging sign of the efficacy of the agreement on that matter. Herter and Phleger replied that the procedure should be as follows:

Loading a cargo onto a ship sailing under an American flag and inviting it to sail to Eilat.

Once the ship and its cargo are determined, the State Department will bring its full weight to bear, promoting the voyage and pledging its support to the ship owners.

It was made clear that the United States is prepared for prompt action if Israel so desires.

Herter wished to maintain the status quo regarding the naval forces in the Gulf and not to have Israeli ships leave the Gulf for the Red Sea, since passing through the Straits would entail sailing close to the Egyptian coast, which Israel undertook in the 1949 armistice agreement to refrain from doing. Eban promised to pass on this recommendation.

On the issue of Gaza, Herter said that American policy aims at establishing UNEF control and putting off any further discussion of the subject. The general intent is to achieve a period of peace and quiet to bolster the achievements and arrangements attained so far. He hopes that all parties involved will show moderation.

In response Eban said that Egypt's announcement of renewing the discrimination against Israel in the Suez Canal is most worrying. If a habit of discrimination is

allowed to set in, it will become very difficult to uproot, therefore it is morally incumbent upon the United States to speak out at once.

Herter said that they will look into it and the United States will be true to its word. He asked whether Israel was going to carry out a trial voyage through the Canal; though Israel has the right to do so, he wishes to advocate caution. The United States and its allies are meanwhile attempting to achieve an interim arrangement for operating the Canal, legally based on the 1888 Constantinople Convention and the six principles,[3] i.e., a dual basis congenial to Israel. They recommend that Israel give this option a chance. Eban replied that he does not know of any trial voyage in the near future, but that Israel's working assumption is that its navigation will not be hampered after the withdrawal.

Eban then addressed a few aspects of direct cooperation between the two governments. He mentioned the prohibition of American tourism to Israel, the grant which must be arranged by the end of April, the agricultural surplus, the return of USOM (United States Operations Mission) personnel, the negotiations with the Export-Import Bank and several other plans that must be discussed. Herter said that they would set about discussions and decisions forthwith. Bergus made it clear that the first topic would be the revocation of the prohibition on travel to Israel, adding that in-depth talks would be held between the State Department, Sherman and Shiloah.

The last subject discussed was the armistice agreement with Egypt and Israel's proclamation that the agreement is null and void. The Americans claimed that Israel is in effect carrying out the main points of the agreement and is therefore eligible to enjoy its benefits such as freedom of navigation and immunity to belligerent acts. They also agreed with Eban that Egypt espouses the agreement but does not carry it out.

Herter, Phleger and Rountree stressed that if Israel were to be satisfied with a wording that denounces Egypt's violation of the agreement they would not challenge it, but if Israel announces a repudiation as a considered legal step, it would, by doing so, destroy the basis on which the United States wishes to help it protect its rights.

Notes

1. Christian Herter, the deputy secretary of state, was filling in for Dulles who was in Canberra for a session of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).
2. No. 516.
3. See no. 9, note 1.

528. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 10 March 1957

Coded Tel. WA907; Inc.: 93.01/2214/4

Summary

Eytan informs the embassy in Washington that the 3,500-ton Danish vessel *Brigitta Tuft*, under charter to the ZIM company (Israel Navigation Company), is on its way from South Africa to Eilat under instructions from Israel and is expected to arrive on 25 March. ZIM received a telegram from the owners in Copenhagen instructing the captain not to enter the Gulf of Aqaba. The owners have the right to refuse to sail to any place which is dangerous due to hostilities or a threat of hostilities. Nonetheless, ZIM will reply that in its opinion the situation in the Gulf does not warrant invoking this right. Obviously this is a most important test case, and Eytan has instructed Israel's ambassador in Copenhagen to intervene swiftly and decisively to ensure that the ship continues on its way to Eilat, by means of an unequivocal instruction from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He must base his approach on the explicit statement made by Eskelond, Denmark's representative to the United Nations, on 4 March, to the effect that his government recognises the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba to be an international waterway and they should be treated as such in practice.

The embassy should contact the State Department immediately so that they should notify Copenhagen of their full support for this voyage.

529. Middle East Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 11 March 1957

Coded Circ. Tel. 898; Outg.: 130.09/2377/5

Summary

Though there are no Egyptian officials or official representatives of Nasser in Gaza, their influence is clearly felt. Their method of taking control of the residents of the Strip is similar to the subversive methods used by Egypt in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Libya and Ethiopia: bribing a few collaborators — generally local leaders — and setting up terrorist groups to help them and keep an eye on them, usually from amongst the rabble or the refugees. These report to the nearest Egyptian military attaché or Fedaiyun commanders. No-one can stand up to such pressure unless

they are backed by a strong organisation or a stable government. In Gaza there is no private or government body that can enable citizens wishing to cooperate with the U.N. actually to do so, if this is contrary to Nasser's wish.

The terrorist groups have already murdered several citizens in order to make their point. Nasser can bring to a halt all cooperation with the U.N. in Gaza; he can instruct his men to make the lives of U.N. clerks and troops miserable and make them leave voluntarily or else give in and do as he bids.

It is advisable to start explaining the situation described above as soon as possible.[1]

Note

1. See no. 571 and note no. 1 there.

530. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 11 March 1957

Coded Tel. XA622; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Kidron reports on his talk with Engen. Engen asked for his assessment of Egypt's announcement on the appointment of an administrative governor for Gaza[2] and the protest sent to the secretary-general concerning the use of UNEF against demonstrators. Kidron replied that there is no doubt that the demonstrations were deliberately staged by Egypt to achieve several aims: to instill fear in potential collaborators, to prove to the United Nations that there will be no peace and quiet in the Strip until Egyptian rule is restored, to pave the way for the appointment of an Egyptian governor and to make UNEF use force to suppress the population and thus make the various governments recall their troops. Engen thought that such a serious interpretation is reasonable but other interpretations are also possible. He added that the secretary-general and the Advisory Committee are very concerned about the situation, and he, as a Norwegian, is all the more worried because of the Norwegian unit stationed in the city of Gaza.

A message arrived from Bunche[3] to the effect that things have calmed down in the Strip. The Committee therefore decided not to jump to conclusions based on recent events but to reconvene on the following day. Engen believes that Egypt will reveal its hand within the next 24 hours. For the same reason the secretary-general decided not to change his mind for the time being about letting matters in Gaza stabilise before travelling to the Middle East to take care of the next steps.

Notes

1. In this telegram Herzog referred to the measures for the Gaza Strip which Hammarskjöld was about to discuss with Nasser during his visit to Cairo (see Herzog to Kidron, YA577, 11 March 1957, 93.01/2186/3; see also no. 515).
2. On 10 March there were mass demonstrations in Gaza calling for the restoration of Egyptian rule. When the demonstrations became violent, U.N. troops used tear-gas and later opened fire on demonstrators and imposed a curfew on the Strip. Egypt accused UNEF of exceeding its authority and announced that it was renewing its rule over the Strip and appointing Major-General Hassan Abdul Latif as governor there.
3. Bunche arrived in Cairo on 10 March to discuss with the Egyptian authorities navigation in the Suez Canal upon its reopening. He then joined General Burns in his visit to the Gaza Strip. For more information on the additional missions assigned to him following the riots in Gaza and Egypt's declaration see no. 532.
4. See no. 515.

531. British Commonwealth Division (Jerusalem) to G. Avner. 11 March 1957

Coded Tel. 799/3; Outg.: 130.09/2321/5

Summary

The British Commonwealth division instructs Avner to request a meeting at the appropriate level in the Foreign Office, in which he would express Israel's surprise and strong opposition to the assumptions contained in Lloyd's statement of 7 March.[1]

Raising again the principles of the Guildhall speech[2] at this moment is bound to heighten tension in the Middle East, encourage the Arabs in their hostile attitude towards Israel and deepen the crisis which could spell danger not just to Israel but to the entire region and the world.

All efforts should now be aimed at preventing Egypt from returning to the Strip and at ensuring freedom of passage in the Gulf of Aqaba and in the Suez Canal. Lloyd's proposals sabotage these aims. Considering Israel's withdrawal according to U.N. resolutions and in light of Macmillan's statement of 25 February[3] and statements by British representatives at the United Nations, Israel would expect Britain to avoid taking any steps that might contribute to the Arabs' intransigence and hostility.

Israel will reject any proposal to station a U.N. force on both sides of the border. Israel has no intention of attacking its neighbours and there is no point whatsoever in placing a U.N. force on its territory. Such a proposal is tantamount to encouraging

Egypt's claims to the Strip and would constitute a serious obstacle to any reasonable solution to this issue.

The timing of Lloyd's statement is most disturbing, since it was made exactly when all the arrangements achieved by the U.N. regarding the Strip and freedom of navigation in the Gulf are being put to the test. Any attempt to placate the Arabs is doomed to failure, will not ensure the interests of the West and will only prepare the ground for a new conflagration.

Notes

1. On 7 March Lloyd announced a plan for settling the Israeli-Arab conflict in a press conference that was broadcast on the radio. The Israeli embassy in London reported on it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see Tel. 435, 8 March 1957, in file 93.04/325/5). The main points of Lloyd's plan were as follows:
   a) Ensuring peace on all borders and cessation of all raids, infiltrations and acts of retaliation;
   b) Settling the problem of the Arab refugees;
   c) Reaching a compromise on permanent borders between Israel and the Arab countries. When Lloyd was asked what he meant by this, he mentioned the principles outlined by Eden in his Guildhall speech.
   d) Reaching an agreement on joint use of the waters of the Jordan river;
   e) Providing both sides with assurances: to the Arabs — for the prevention of territorial expansion by Israel, and to Israel — to prevent any attempt by the Arab countries to annihilate it.
2. In a speech at the Guildhall in London on 9 November 1955, Eden described the basic principles of the Alpha Plan, a British-American plan formulated in early 1955, aimed at achieving a solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict. According to this plan, Israel was required to agree to changes in its borders with Jordan and Egypt in order to provide territorial continuity between them in the Negev. In addition, Israel would be required to agree to take in some 75,000–150,000 refugees, as well as to pay compensation to refugees opting not to return. In exchange for these concessions Israel was promised international guarantees for its new borders, the termination of the Arab boycott, and freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal; it would also be allowed to join the regional system of defence treaties.
3. See no. 479.

532. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog (Jerusalem) and R. Shiloah (Washington). 12 March 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA337; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Kidron and Eban met with members of the Advisory Committee excluding India and Pakistan, as well as with representatives of France, Britain and the United States. All were told that, as far as Israel is concerned, an Egyptian general entering the Strip is the same as the Egyptian army entering it and this spells a renewal of tension on the border. If they wish to prevent grave developments, they must exert their best efforts to foil Egypt's scheme.[1] This warning was received with appropriate concern and seriousness. The Ceylonese representative said that the committee is awaiting a sign from Washington. The French reacted in the same way as Mollet did,[2] the British advocated caution and the Americans undertook to pass on Israel's grievances to the State Department.

After the committee meeting, Kidron held a talk with Engen. Kidron asked what instructions were given to Bunche before the latter's meeting with Nasser, to which Engen replied that Bunche had instructions to call on Nasser to postpone any attempt to renew his civil control of the Strip, while at the same time retaining his legal rights. This, at least, is the position held by most members of the committee, and of the secretary-general and the United States.

In a talk with the secretary-general, initiated by Kidron and also attended by Cordier, Kidron asked the secretary-general about the situation in Gaza and Egypt's plans and mentioned his last talk with the minister of foreign affairs.[3]

The secretary-general described the riots in Gaza and admitted that the demonstrations had been organised but claimed he could not determine who the organiser was. Since then it has been quiet in the Strip. As for the appointment of an Egyptian governor — that step took him by surprise and worries him. It is too early yet to determine whether the announcement of the appointment was a propaganda measure only, or if Egypt actually means to carry it out. Therefore he has instructed Bunche, who was originally supposed to visit only Gaza and the Suez Canal, to meet with Nasser in order to clarify matters. He himself plans to fly to Cairo on Saturday and to stay there for about a week.

Kidron pressured Hammarskjöld to tell him what instructions were given to Bunche in preparation for the latter's talk with Nasser, but Hammarskjöld avoided a clear answer, saying that Bunche is acting within the framework of the resolutions of the General Assembly. Finally he said that Bunche's instructions are fully coordinated with the United States down to the last detail, and that Bunche knows quite well that the secretary-general wishes the initial period, when UNEF has

exclusive control of the Strip, to continue for as long as possible. Bunche is also expected to make it clear to Nasser in no uncertain terms that the U.N. is determined to put a stop once and for all to raids across the border.

Notes

1. On 14 March the *New York Times* published a telegram sent by Francisco Urrutia, a member of the Advisory Committee and Colombia's representative to the United Nations, to the Egyptian minister of foreign affairs. In this telegram Urrutia maintained that the Committee members recognise Egypt's right to rule Gaza according to the armistice agreement, but they believe the time has not yet come to restore Egyptian rule. The United Nations requires a reasonable period of time for the first phase of organising the administration of Gaza. In summing up, Urrutia expressed his hope that Egypt would not take hasty steps leading to a situation that UNEF could not handle, which would require an urgent discussion in the Security Council or in the U.N. Assembly (see *The Political Battle*, p. 332).
2. Mollet said in a television broadcast from Paris that recent events in Gaza prove that France was right in its critical attitude towards Nasser.
3. See no. 511.

533. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 12 March 1957

Coded Circ.Tel. 904; Inc.: 93.04/330/12

Summary

Eytan reports to the embassy that Lawson was summoned by the minister of foreign affairs who told him that she is gravely concerned. After the public announcement of Nasser's appointment of a general as the governor of Gaza, a message arrived from a reliable source to the effect that U.N. headquarters are allowing his entry, together with his staff, into the Gaza Strip. Israel will not accept a situation in which the Egyptians return to Gaza in any way. If the situation deteriorates Israel will have no choice but to exercise its right to self defence, in line with its statement in the General Assembly[1] and according to the interpretation given in Pineau's message to Dulles.[2] Israel is well aware of the fact that the U.N. force is in the Strip. Nonetheless the Israeli government cannot abandon the Negev settlements.

After reviewing the talks with Dulles and with Lodge, Meir stressed her lack of faith in Hammarskjöld and said there was only one way to prevent a catastrophe, namely, having the secretary of state make clear to the U.N. secretary-general the position of the United States on this issue, placing the responsibility for any war that might break out on him and convincing him that Israel will not be at the

mercy of Nasser's pressure. She suggested that Dulles had not been briefed on recent developments, and that Hammarskjöld would not dare act against the United States.

This is the twelfth hour and the United States must act on its pledges. Lawson asked whether the Negev settlements could not be protected by a physical barrier and U.N. patrols, to which the minister responded that Israel withdrew from the Strip on the clear understanding that there would be no de facto return of Egypt to the Strip.

Lawson expressed his personal opinion that Dulles did not give the secretary-general his approval to bring back the Egyptians and asked that Israel not lose its faith in him. Meir replied that this faith must now be proven in action. She asked Lawson to send a copy of his report to Dulles in Canberra.

Notes

1. See no. 493.
2. See no. 512, Appendix.
3. Compare *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 215, p. 403, note 3.

534. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 12 March 1957

Coded Tel. WIA290; Inc.: 130.09/2312/2

Summary

The embassy reports on Shiloah's meeting with Herter, also attended by Rountree, Roberts and Meroz.

Shiloah expressed, on behalf of the foreign minister, Israel's deep concern over the events unfolding in the Strip. Nasser's declarations make his intentions crystal clear, and anyone attributing these declarations to his domestic purposes alone is engaging in wishful thinking. The Fedaiyun are back, agents were sent to stage the riots, a governor has been appointed and — worst of all — Israel knows that the United Nations has acquiesced in the entry of this governor and his entourage into Gaza. All this clearly indicates the beginning of Egypt's take-over of Gaza, with all that this implies for the security of Israel and the entire region.

Shiloah went on to say that only an unambiguous and firm stand by the United States towards Hammarskjöld and Egypt can change the situation. Acquiescence in Nasser's provocations in Gaza and in the Suez Canal[1] is likely to lead to disaster. Israel had hoped that a change had taken place in the stand of the United States

and the enlightened world towards Nasser, and therefore agreed to an act of faith. The Israeli government's first responsibility is the security of the country, and the return of Egypt places Israel's safety and peace in the region in serious jeopardy. Therefore Israel is approaching the United States with a very grave appeal to exert all its influence forthwith, in Cairo or in the United Nations, to ensure that a new crisis does not erupt.

Herter replied that just as he had asked Israel not to embark on any test case that might exacerbate tensions, and asked for some time to stabilise the situation in the region,[2] so he is now asking Egypt to abstain from any inflammatory action.[3] Shiloah responded that the government of Israel has no intention of precipitating any tests, but he firmly rejects any comparison between Egypt and Israel. Herter promptly replied that he did not mean to do so, and all their efforts are directed at ensuring peace in the region.

Shiloah moved on to the subject of the *Brigitta Tuft*[4] and said that Rountree's reply was most disappointing. (Rountree had told him, before the meeting, that the United States cannot approach the government of Denmark, but should the Danes ask, the United States will reply that they have no objection to the ship's sailing to Eilat.) It would seem that Israel's interpretation of the aide mémoire of 11 November[5] is completely different from their own, while Israel hoped that the U.S. stand would show more encouragement of other countries. Shiloah claimed that this was the first case enabling the practical application of the principles set down, and Nasser has publicly announced his rejection of those principles. Israel has no need of a public announcement, but it is possible and desirable to encourage the Danes through diplomatic channels and to offer them moral support.[6] At this point Herter corrected Rountree's statement and said that the United States would not only express "no objection" but give its full support.

At the end of this talk, Shiloah explained the seriousness of the internal situation in Israel, where trust in the arrangement achieved is being undermined, and called on the United States to help stabilise the situation by curbing Nasser.

Notes

1. On 9 March Egypt rejected the plan for a temporary arrangement on Canal transit dues, proposed by the United States, Britain, France and Norway in mid-February in preparation for the re-opening of the Suez Canal (see no. 535, note 5), and demanded the full sum. On 11 March Nasser announced that he would not allow the passage of Israeli ships through the Canal.
2. See no. 527.
3. The U.S. ambassador to Egypt, Hare, protested strongly to Nasser about the latter's declaration concerning the Gaza Strip and the appointment of an Egyptian governor. He reminded him that it was only thanks to U.N. intervention that his regime remained in place after the war (see *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 217, pp. 404–405).
4. See no. 528.

5. No. 404.
6. In his telegram to the Israel permanent mission to the United Nations, Eytan demanded: "Please take action to express the stand of the State Department and the U.N. Secretariat in the clearest way possible to the Danish government, because meanwhile the ship is continuing on its way to Eilat and it must not be allowed to turn back. [I] suggest contact with Denmark's representative in the U.N." (Tel. TNW199, 13 March 1957, 130.09/2339/15).

535. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and W. Eytan. 12 March 1957

Coded Tel. 815; Outg.: 72/2/915/30

Summary

Tsur met with Pineau and told him of the gravity of the situation that had developed in Gaza, the danger of the return of the Egyptians and the implications for Israel's security, for UNEF, for the United Nations and for the United States. He asked Pineau to take immediate action to preserve the commitments undertaken by France in the negotiations in Washington.

Pineau agreed with the evaluation of the danger inherent in Egypt's moves. He said that the United States had undertaken a very clear obligation and mentioned the message sent by France to Washington,[1] which explicitly said that should Egypt return to Gaza, Israel would be within its rights to act in self defence. An urgent message was dispatched from Paris to Dulles in Australia, and the French ambassador is contacting the State Department in Washington.[3] He hopes that nothing serious happens before the secretary of state returns to the United States. The danger lies in Hammarskjöld's attitude, since he is proposing to reconvene the General Assembly but the French are against this step and are demanding that the United States and Canada intervene firmly in order to prevent the re-entry of Egypt into Gaza. Pineau is optimistic with regard to the U.S. position on this issue, particularly in light of the reaction of public opinion; it is doubtful that the United States will be able to withstand such pressure.

Pineau is of the opinion that at the moment it is better for Israel not to make any move. However, if the Egyptian administration returns, Israel should reserve the right to reconquer Gaza, though it would be best if this were done as a police action aimed at taking control of the situation rather than as a major military operation. He hopes that matters will not reach such a pass, because the United States stands to lose any influence it has in the Middle East if it lets Nasser have his own way.

With regard to the Suez Canal, the inclination is to boycott the Canal if Nasser refuses the arrangement.[5] The British and the Norwegians are prepared for such

an eventuality. The United States may also join them. In any case, it is possible that some 50% of all shipping companies will boycott the Canal, and that is a considerable achievement. As for Israel's right of navigation, Pineau is of the opinion that eventually Israel will have to arrange the passage of a ship, but advises it not to rush and not to link this action with a firm stand on its rights in Gaza. Pineau stressed that if Israel embarks on any sort of operation, France pledges its full help and support.

As for the pipeline, he is steadfast in his decision to take part in the Eilat pipeline, Dulles' opinion of which is more positive than he had thought. The Americans are currently thinking of building a 16 inch pipe, since sources of oil are clearly available for such a pipeline. The difficulty lies in Ramadier's objection, and the French government will make an effort to come up with a plan that will include private capital for this pipeline. He will be happy to discuss the matter with Eshkol.[6]

Notes

1. See no. 512, Appendix.
2. *Ibid.*
3. In his telegram to Herzog, Shiloah reported that he met with Alphand, the French ambassador to the United States, and advised him to request a meeting at the State Department and to demand that the United States speak promptly and decisively to Hammarskjöld, warning him against U.N. acceptance of the entry of an Egyptian governor into Gaza (see Shiloah to Herzog, Tel. 285, 12 March 1957, 130.09/2312/2).
4. The heads of state and foreign ministers of Britain and France met in Paris on 9 March to discuss various international problems, including the Middle East, navigation in the Suez Canal and the relations between Israel and the Arab states.
5. See no. 534, note 1. According to the proposal of the four countries, Egypt was to receive half of the transit fees in the Canal, while the second half was to be deposited with the World Bank until a final arrangement was achieved.
6. Eshkol was to arrive in Paris on 21 March for talks with the French. See no. 576, note 1.

536. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in Washington. 12 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA194; Inc.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Eytan reports that Gilbert, who is about to leave for Paris, was received by the minister of foreign affairs. He is very concerned about the situation and advises adopting a forceful stand. If the United States in effect turns its back on the

arrangement in Gaza, this will lead to a general deterioration on the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba fronts as well. Meir told Gilbert that she intends to make it clear to the U.S. ambassador[1] that Israel will insist that the United States live up to Dulles' promise and oppose the return of Egypt to Gaza, and that Israel will not flinch from preventing such a return. She further said — and Gilbert agreed — that only the United States can halt such a deterioration, by sending an unequivocal message to the secretary-general of the U.N. saying that it strongly objects to the re-entry of Egypt into the Strip. It was agreed that Gilbert would telegraph his government, requesting an immediate appeal to the United States and warning about the dangerous situation which is developing.

Gilbert expressed his view that Israel must include one of its own ships in the first convoy to pass through the Suez Canal upon its reopening. If it misses this opportunity, no other Israeli ship will ever sail there again and its status in the Gulf will be severely compromised. He recounted that the Mollet-Macmillan[2] talks failed miserably, both on the subject of the Common Market and on Suez. The British, under U.S. pressure, are willing to give in to Nasser's terms regarding payment of transit fees,[3] whereas France firmly objects to them. Israel's insistence on right of passage in the first convoy will also help France. It is both desirable and worthwhile to approach Mollet and Pineau on all matters of importance, since they are interested in helping Israel, as by doing so they also help themselves.

Notes

1. See no. 533.
2. See no. 535, note 4.
3. See no. 534, note 1; no. 535, note 5.

537. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in Washington. 12 March 1957

Copy: 130.2/2452/5

Summary

Bartur informs Eban that the 18,000 ton American tanker *Kern Hills*, under time charter to the Israeli petrol company, is sailing to Iran with the aim of arriving there in April and loading oil that was purchased from the national Iranian company. The ship is scheduled to bring its cargo to Eilat, where it should drop anchor around 10 April, and this oil will serve to start operating the oil pipeline. In his opinion, the

State Department should be advised of this fact early in April, after the ship has left Iran and is on its way to Eilat.

Note

1. The *Kern Hills* loaded in Iran on 26 March and left on its way to Eilat (see Arnon and Kosloff to Eshkol, Tel. 854, 27 March 1957, 130.09/2321/5).

538. Message from Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower (Washington). 13 March 1957

Copy: 130.02/5938/10

Note

1. On 1 March Ben-Gurion had also announced in the Knesset, in response to a question posed by Yigal Allon, that according to the statement made by Israel's minister of foreign affairs in the U.N. assembly, Israel reserves the right to take action should Egypt return to the Gaza Strip (see *Divrei HaKnesset* (Knesset Reports), Vol. XXI, 1956–1957, p. 1343).
   In a meeting with Dayan on 15 March, Ben-Gurion said that he did not intend to respond to the Egyptian entry into Gaza with a military operation, but he would react harshly to any attempt by Egypt to interfere with navigation through the Straits and in the Gulf of Aqaba. In such a case, Israel will react by targeting Egyptian ships at sea and even coastal installations in the ports of Port Said and Alexandria (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 15 March 1957).

539. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Meir and J. Herzog. 13 March 1957

Coded Tel. 297; Inc.: 130.09/2312/2

Summary

Eban reports on a talk with Herter, also attended by Shiloah, Murphy, Phleger and Rountree.

Eban read out the prime minister's message[1] and gave it to Herter. He stressed the last item and enumerated the subjects which had been agreed with the United States and which made the withdrawal possible: exclusive UNEF control in the Strip for the initial period and a U.N. administration until a peace settlement; de

facto exclusion of Egypt from the Strip and Egypt's waiving the exercise of its legal "rights"; cessation of all hostilities on land and at sea promptly upon the completion of the withdrawal; the secretary of state's promise that this would signal the opening of a new chapter in U.S.-Israel relations; the promise that the withdrawal would bring greater tranquillity to the region.

Contrary to all the above, the result has been the following events: increased tension in settlements next to the border, renewal of security operations and guard duty; Fedaiyun running wild inside the Strip and on Israeli territory; chaos and instability within the Strip, with Egypt undermining the U.N.'s authority; Egyptian threats of renewing the blockade and reverting to belligerency status; obvious signs that Egypt is attempting to take over the Suez Canal completely and ignore both the United Nations and all users of the Canal.

Keeping all the above circumstances in mind, it is obvious that once an Egyptian governor arrives in Gaza his intention will be to prepare the Strip for war with Israel. Israel's conclusion is therefore self-evident.

Herter responded that the State Department shares all these concerns and views the situation with the severity it merits. It is making efforts to ensure that the hopes which the United States and Israel had agreed upon will not be dashed. He cannot provide any more detailed reply, but he will telephone the next day and hopes he will be able to be more specific. Meanwhile, the prime minister's message will be brought to the immediate attention of the president.

Note

1. No. 538.

540. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 13 March 1957

Coded Tel. WIA296; Outg.: 93.01/2214/4

Summary

Eban expresses his opinion that the most practical and effective way of dealing with the issue of the Straits is by sending through the first U.S. vessel, as proposed in his talk with Herter of 10 March.[1] This would have more of an effect on the Danish shipping company and on others than anything else; it will also be less complicated for the United States than initiating appeals on the subject to other countries.

One would expect Denmark to approach the United States concerning the sailing of the *Brigitta Toft*, in order to receive the positive response Herter had agreed to in his talk with Reuven Shiloah.[2]

Notes

1. See no. 527.
2. See no. 534.

541. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 13 March 1957

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.23/3091/1

Summary

Eban reports that Herter telephoned him to say that he has spoken with the president and the following day the White House will announce the U.S. intention of renewing economic cooperation with Israel. To this end, consultations will be resumed on all topics of common interest. (Herter explained that this refers to all enterprises discussed prior to 29 October, including grants and loans.) He added that the United States was about to decide also about travel and tourism, but due to the military tension it has been decided to wait and see how things develop in Gaza.

Eban voiced his concern about rumours coming from Cairo concerning Bunche's talks.[1] Herter said that the United States is making supreme efforts, both in Cairo and in influencing the U.N. secretary-general.

Note

1. In a talk between Nasser and Bunche on 13 March in Cairo, the two discussed the status of U.N. forces in the Gaza Strip, and it was agreed that Egypt would assume civil administration of the Strip. After the talk Bunche said that UNEF is not holding up the arrival of the Egyptian administration and that it will cooperate with it. (On the next day Bunche denied saying this). A day earlier, Bunche said to journalists in Cairo that from the U.N.'s point of view there is no problem with Egypt's legal status in the Gaza Strip, since that status is based on the armistice agreement and on resolutions of the U.N. General Assembly.

542. J. Barmore (Warsaw) to the East European Division. 13 March 1957

Coded Tel. 233; Inc.: 130.09/2306/12

Summary

Barmore reports that the Repatriation Committee has advised the Israel legation that Jews returning from the Soviet Union will not be allowed to immigrate to Israel and must remain in Poland, because only on that condition were they allowed to leave the Soviet Union.[1] It was clearly hinted that this instruction is the result of pressure from Moscow. From now on, returning Jews will have to sign a statement to the effect that they will not apply to emigrate from Poland.

Refusals of requests for tourist visas to Israel and for emigration passports for people with essential professions are becoming increasingly common. This is in addition to the prohibition that applies to employees of the Party administration, the security services and the army.

Barmore believes that the recent stricter measures enforced by the regime point to Poland's gradual withdrawal from its independent line, including its attitude towards Israel. This may also be reflected in significant restrictions on immigration to Israel. The prohibition on immigration recently imposed on the repatriated Jews causes difficulties first and foremost to Poland itself. Because Poland suffers from lack of sufficient housing, these people will also need help in settling there, which will only add to the country's economic woes and will exacerbate the problem of the Jewish minority. However, it would seem that Soviet pressure overshadowed all these considerations.[2]

Notes

1. Until March, 4,000 repatriated Jews arrived in Poland from the Soviet Union, of whom 1,500 immigrated to Israel and another 2,000 had already been given visas to leave Poland (see Harman to Joseph, Friedman and Hammer, Y611, 19 March 1957, 93.01/2186/1).
2. See also the letter of 19 March from Katriel Katz to the East European division on "the decree that repatriated Jews must stay" (the letter is in file 130.23/3115/5). Katz explained the background to the direct pressure exerted by the Soviets on the Polish leadership, which led to the imposition of the prohibition of emigration of repatriated Jews to Israel.

543. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 14 March 1957

Coded Tel. WIA300; Inc.: 130.09/2312/2

Summary

Eban reports on a telephone conversation with Hammarskjöld. Eban referred to reports which had reached him about the Bunche-Nasser talks, and particularly to the rumour that the Egyptian governor and his staff are coming to Gaza. He said that the government of Israel would refuse to accept the establishment of an Egyptian civilian administration in Gaza, and asked whether Bunche was authorised to commit the United Nations.

The secretary-general responded that he is trying as hard as he can to ensure that no de facto situation is created before he arrives in the region. Bunche's function is to inquire and argue but not to undertake commitments. Hammarskjöld claimed he finds himself in an ambiguous situation. The Assembly did not authorise him to oppose the entry of the Egyptians into Gaza, while on the other hand the Americans and the French are talking to him of "assumptions" made in talks in Washington. Under such circumstances he has no option but to ask Egypt not to create any de facto situation until he gets there and looks into things. He expressed concern over Eban's statement that Israel will not accept this situation.

544. C. Herter (Washington) to G. Meir. 14 March 1957

Copy: 130.02/2459/13

Notes

1. No. 516.
2. See no. 497.

545. Z. Argaman (Washington) to J. Herzog. 14 March 1957

Coded Tel. WIA314; Inc.: 130.09/2312/2

Summary

Argaman reports that Rountree met Eban to give him Herter and the State Department's assessment of the significance of the entry of the Egyptian governor into Gaza. Eban wished to know whether Egypt is about to run the administration there and whether there is any chance that the U.N. will remain and take responsibility for it. He stressed that Egypt's move is giving rise to grave concern in Israel, and he wishes to convey the opinion of the United States to the Israeli government before the latter decides on its next move.

Rountree said, on behalf of Herter, that the United States too is concerned over recent developments. It has used all its influence in order to prevent the entry of Egyptian personnel into Gaza, at least until Hammarskjöld arrives in Cairo. He assumes that despite the arrival of the governor, the U.N.'s functions, both military and in terms of its responsibility for administration, have not been and will not be compromised. The U.S. assessment is that Egypt was motivated to take this step by considerations of politics and prestige. The United States will continue to act vis-à-vis the U.N., so as to induce it to fulfil its responsibility for the administration of Gaza, and he hopes that Hammarskjöld manages to achieve that. So far the impression is that the U.N.'s functions have not been taken away. Following instructions, Ambassador Hare approached Egypt but an account of his talk has not yet been received.

Herter wished to convey that he believes the situation may become serious, but in his opinion it can be overcome providing the reaction to it is as moderate as possible; it is important to avoid creating complications that may have severe repercussions. Rountree reiterated that he wishes to reassure Israel that the United States is sparing no effort to realise their joint aspirations and it is confidant that these can indeed materialise.

Eban wished to know whether the United States is striving to achieve the three aims defined by Foreign Minister Meir on 1 March.[2] Rountree replied that the United States remains true to these guidelines as defined in Eisenhower's message[3] and in the other relevant documents, and that it will continue to act according to those guidelines in the future as well. He commented that the idea has always been to achieve exclusive control of Gaza by the U.N. but they took into account the possibility of the presence of a few token Egyptians to indicate Egypt's formal link to Gaza. The secretary of state expressed this assumption on 2 March,[4] though he would prefer that no Egyptian enter Gaza in any formal capacity.

The ambassador said that this case is about something far more serious than anything the secretary foresaw, and mentioned two difficulties embodied in the entry of the Egyptian governor into Gaza:

Possible splitting of administrative authority, which would cancel out any chance of effective governance by the U.N.

Creation of a focal point for mob unrest, which would destroy all moral authority of the U.N. administration.

Rountree admitted that the difficulties have indeed increased, but he cannot say that all hope is lost, which is why the United States is willing to continue working towards realising these hopes. He promised to look into the possibility of providing a clear statement and confirmation of the American position, not only diplomatically but also publicly.

Notes

1. Probably Everett Gleason, deputy executive secretary of the National Security Council.
2. No. 493.
3. No. 498.
4. See no. 497.

546. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 14 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA204; Inc.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Herzog informs Eban that there is great concern in Jerusalem over the recent turn of events. Reliable information has been received that the first representatives of the Egyptian administration are expected to enter Gaza Strip in one day's time. Also there is grave concern that Nasser, the U.N. secretary-general and Dulles will make any step in Israel's favour dependent on its consent to the entry of a U.N. force into Nitzana and along the Israeli side of the armistice demarcation line.

According to reliable information about talks with the U.N. secretary-general before the debate in the General Assembly, the State Department wanted both Lodge and the secretary-general to mention the deploying of a U.N. force on the Israeli side, but the matter was omitted from their speeches at the last minute so as to end the session without another crisis with Israel. (According to the same information, Dulles denied, in a conversation with the secretary-general, that the United States recognised Israel's right to self defence concerning Gaza.)

Herzog tells Eban that Rafael claims that they knew that Lodge was about to insert that paragraph into his speech but managed to persuade him to omit it, also that in Eban's talk with Herter,[2] Herter mentioned the stationing of UNEF on the Israeli side. Neither of these two matters was reported to Jerusalem, either by New York or by Washington.[3]

The reports on the talks with Dulles show that the latter never raised this matter, and therefore Israel should claim that raising it in connection with Gaza amounts to a breach of faith by the United States. The minister of foreign affairs believes that this breach of faith should be brought to the attention of the Senate, as well as to the editors of *The [New York] Times* and the *Herald Tribune*.

Notes

1. The telegram was not found.
2. See no. 527.
3. In reply to this telegram Eban wrote: "Herter never mentioned, either explicitly or implicitly, the matter of deploying U.N. forces on our side of the border, and that is why we did not report it. As for Lodge, it is true that we did hear on that day, from certain sources in the American mission, that there was such an intention, and we immediately took action with the State Department to prevent it. We received no confirmation of there having been such an intention. The fact is that no such paragraph appeared in Lodge's speech" (see Eban to Herzog, WNTA239, 14 March 1957, 130.09/2314/7).
4. In a consultation with Ben-Gurion which took place on the following day, attended by Meir and Herzog, Meir suggested to Ben-Gurion that she leave for Washington for urgent consultations with Dulles. Ben-Gurion was sceptical as to the usefulness of such a meeting, but did not object to her request (see entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, 15 March 1957).

547. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and W. Eytan. 14 March 1957

Coded Tel. 842; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on talks with Joxe and Daridan. France protested vehemently about Egypt's move into Gaza. Mollet sent a note to Eisenhower[1] and Alphand approached Herter, who apparently was reluctant to decide on any action before Dulles' return. The French also contacted Dulles in Canberra who replied that he would look into the matter as soon as he got back to Washington.

Georges-Picot spoke with Hammarskjöld and the talk was both disappointing and worrying. The secretary-general denied the words attributed to Bunche[3] by

Radio Cairo but at the same time claimed that Nasser's intention is to appoint "a civilian governor" accompanied by four civilian clerks who would come to Gaza, and denied that he intends to bring in Egyptian administration at this point. The secretary-general said he was travelling to Cairo and George-Picot warned him not to create a fait accompli with Nasser and not to let Nasser gain easy victories. Hammarskjöld agreed and said he would be careful, but Picot cannot vouch that this will indeed be the case.

Both Joxe and Daridan feel grave concern about the situation. They promise that France will stand at Israel's side unconditionally, and they are also well aware of the indirect danger to the Suez issue. They propose a large-scale information campaign against the United States, which distorts things and does not live up to its promises. Also the clear impression must remain that Israel is prepared to employ military means should the arrangement be breached. Though Hammarskjöld seems surprised by Egypt's move and supposedly embarrassed by it, Joxe believes that the entire move was his brainchild, and it is his revenge for the fact that the negotiations and agreements were conducted and arrived at behind his back.

Notes

1. In his note of 14 March to Eisenhower, Mollet claims that Egypt's actions in the Gaza Strip justify Israel's fears and its warning that if the situation in the Strip deteriorates further, it would have to reconquer it. Mollet begged the president to use his personal influence both in the United Nations and towards Egypt so that Israel is not forced to make good its warning (see *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 220, pp. 415–416).
2. See no. 538, note 1.
3. See no. 541, note 1.

548. M. Kidron (New York) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Paris) and J. Herzog (Jerusalem). 15 March 1957

Coded Tel. NPTA64; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Kidron sums up Eban's talk with Hammarskjöld, also attended by Cordier and himself.

Eban informed the secretary-general of the foreign minister's impending visit.[1] The secretary-general responded by saying he would postpone his Cairo trip, adding that he would like to speak to Meir before he leaves for Cairo, in order to ensure that his talks there will be based on the clearest view possible of both the Israeli and the American stands.

Eban reviewed the history of the negotiations in Washington between Israel, the United States and France on the withdrawal and emphasised that both the initiative and the original wording of the proposals were French-American.

The working assumption in those negotiations was that the administration of the Gaza Strip would be exclusively in the hands of the United Nations. This basic premise was confirmed by the United States and by other states and served as the basis for the withdrawal. The recent move by Egypt negates this premise, creating a serious and tense situation.

The secretary-general gave his review of the negotiations, in which he took no part, and the developments leading to Egypt's move. He had tried to ensure that Gaza would be run according to the facts on the ground without getting involved in the legal issue.When Bunche approached Nasser about the information that the governor and his entourage are about to enter the Strip, Nasser promised him that no decisions would be taken on important issues until the secretary-general arrived. Hammarskjöld said he did not know how far Egypt intended to take this, but he is convinced that they did not intend to bring in military forces. The Egyptians had stressed their desire to prevent raids and infiltration, and there is no sign that they want to oust UNEF.

Eban summed up the crucial fact from Israel's point of view: certain states had achieved Israel's withdrawal from Gaza based on the premise of U.N. de facto control after the evacuation. This basic premise has now been completely undermined and therefore the crisis is a serious one. The main reckoning is now with those governments — chief among them the United States — which had convinced Israel to withdraw. However the secretary-general must also take into consideration Israel's opposition to an Egyptian administration in Gaza. The secretary-general replied that he has asked the United States for a most serious clarification of its stand, which he must know. He knows what Egypt's stand is.

Eban said he doubts that it is at all conceivable for both the United Nations and Egypt to remain in Gaza, when the U.N. must treat Israel as a sovereign state entitled to security while Egypt treats it as an enemy in a state of belligerency. Israel's nightmare is that Egypt will work behind the U.N.'s back, organising the Gaza population, inciting it to act against Israel and renewing infiltration. The secretary-general replied that the U.N.'s function is to prevent a conflagration, and he believes that that is Egypt's wish as well.

The talk concluded with a discussion of Hammarskjöld's visit to Israel.

Notes

1. See no. 546, note 4. The minister of foreign affairs left Israel on 15 March, only a few days after her return from the U.N. General Assembly. Her aim was to call on the United States to take swift and decisive action to keep Egypt out of the Gaza Strip and ensure exclusive U.N. control, in accordance with the understanding reached between

the two countries before Israel's withdrawal. In addition, Meir wished to prepare public opinion in the United States for the possibility that Israel might have to act on its right to self defence in Gaza.

2. See no. 462, note 1.
3. See no. 530, note 2.
4. Article I of the armistice agreement between Israel and Egypt prohibits the use of military force, threats and the planning and execution of aggressive acts. Article II prohibits "war-like or hostile acts" beyond the armistice demarcation line, as well as crossing that line for any purpose whatsoever.
5. See no. 397, note 6.
6. See no. 538, note 1.

549. Message from President Eisenhower (Washington) to Prime Minister D. Ben-Gurion. 15 March 1957

Copy: Ben-Gurion Archives

Note

1. No. 538

550. G. Avner (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 15 March 1957

Coded Tel.: Outg.: 93.04/328/22

Summary

Avner reports on a talk with Ross. Avner demanded, according to Circ. Tel. 912,[1] that Britain take firm diplomatic action with regard to the United States and the U.N. secretariat, in line with its government's position on U.N. control of the Gaza Strip. Ross said he sees no difficulty in accommodating this demand and that he would recommend it to Lloyd. He confirmed that Britain does indeed support U.N. control of the Strip without a civil administration, either Egyptian or Israeli.

The British were most surprised by the reports in the press on Bunche's statement that the U.N. would cooperate with an Egyptian civil administration in the Gaza Strip. Nonetheless, Ross is obliged to ask Israel to restrain itself and avoid any hasty measures that might only aggravate the situation.

On the issue of territorial compromise, which Britain supports,[3] he said that he is familiar with Israel's reservations concerning the plan, but Israel must recognise

that there is a difference of opinion between the Israeli and British governments on this issue.

Ross addressed the topic of the arms which Jordan received following the evacuation of the British military bases there, but claimed that these arms would not disrupt the military balance between Jordan and Israel. In this context Avner mentioned Israel's complaints regarding the suspension of the shipment of arms and spare parts purchased in Britain prior to the war, in view of the massive flow of Soviet arms to Arab states. Ross replied that as long as the U.N. resolution of 2 November[8] is in effect, nothing can be done in this matter. He added that in the future Britain would renew its military aid to Israel in line with the principle of preserving the general balance and according to political circumstances in the region.

Avner also complained about the delaying of credit for civilian purchases, mainly Britannia aircraft. Ross claimed that the delay was purely economic and stemmed from the belief of the Export Credit Guarantee Department that, due to the risk of sanctions on Israel, any further credit should be delayed. Avner requested Ross' intervention, since now the threat of sanctions was removed the situation once again allows for the renewal of credit. Ross said he would look into it.

Avner also spoke about the Jewish refugees from Morocco currently staying in Gibraltar, and asked that the existing arrangement be prolonged despite the pressure exerted by Morocco on Britain to cancel it. Ross replied that the arrangement could continue until the summer, and even then they would not close Gibraltar to refugees from Morocco; however they would no longer stay conspicuously in a formal camp maintained by Israel or its representatives.

Notes

1. This paragraph says: "Should the situation deteriorate, Israel will have no choice but to act in self defence, in line with the statement by the minister of foreign affairs at the U.N. General Assembly. The only way to avert disaster is therefore for the various governments and international public opinion to demand from the United States and from the U.N. secretary-general not to allow Egypt to re-enter Gaza; Gaza is not Egyptian territory and Egypt's only interest there is to act upon its proclaimed state of belligerency with Israel, by repeated attacks on the Negev settlements. Israel, by evacuating its forces, has undertaken an act of faith towards the international community, and the latter must repay this trust by alertness and by ensuring that there be no reversion to the earlier situation" (see Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, Circ. Tel. 912, 13 March 1957, 130.09/2377/5).
2. Lloyd expressed his support for civil administration in Gaza in reply to a question in Parliament on 30 January.
3. See no. 531, note 2.
4. See no. 531.
5. The Tripartite Declaration of 1950. See no. 4, note 2.
6. See no 439, note 1.

7. See no. 253; no. 282; no. 283.
8. See Editorial Note no. 11.
9. See no. 282.

551. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 16 March 1957

Coded Tel. XA650; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Kidron sums up Eban's talk with Pearson. Pearson said he had decided to take part in the meeting of the Advisory Committee in person in order to make the Canadian government's stand on the role of UNEF under the present circumstances clear to the U.N. secretary-general on the eve of his trip to Cairo. Pearson evaluates the situation as both serious and dangerous, though he had expected complications due to the vagueness of the General Assembly resolutions.

He had informed the Committee that Canada would not let UNEF be a scapegoat and enumerated three factors that could force Canada to withdraw its unit:

if Egypt takes control of the U.N. force; if Gaza once again becomes a battleground for conflict between Israel and Egypt; if Egypt refuses to accept the Canadian force.

Pearson said that the situation requires all parties involved to display moderation and restraint. He believes two factors may tip the scales:

Egypt's refusal to accept de facto U.N. control of the Strip, and especially its exclusive responsibility for internal security;

If Israel decides that the security situation on its border with the Strip demands the use of force, while the rest of the world is not convinced that such a move is justified.

Pearson stressed the responsibility that lies on the United States, which should pressure Egypt in every possible way. He noted that the secretary-general is beginning to show resentment over the fact that the United States is saddling him with the responsibility of finding solutions.

552. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan and the West European Division. 16 March 1957

Coded Tel. 852; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on the talks held by the minister of foreign affairs in Paris.

She met with Mollet who was uncomfortable and concerned about the turn of events. He finds it hard to accept that Eisenhower and Dulles misled him and made him responsible for an arrangement which was not complied with. He is convinced that this was a scheme devised by Dulles. He insisted that France entered the negotiations at the explicit request of the United States, and they were told explicitly that the arrangement does not constitute a return to the armistice agreement, but rather creates the possibility of a new solution that circumvents the United Nations and the armistice agreement. Mollet sees this whole sorry affair as moral bankruptcy on the part of the United States, which has lost credibility and would no longer be believed.

Mollet received a reply to his message from Eisenhower. Its gist was that the United States is just as interested as France that peace be maintained by both sides, including the armistice. He does not mention in a single word the negotiations preceding Meir's speech. Mollet added that upon receiving the message he told the American representative in Paris that its contents are not compatible with the agreement between them. He promised that France would stand by Israel and enlist all diplomatic means available to it; he has high hopes for the campaign to stir up public opinion in the United States.

The talk with Joxe took place without Pineau. Joxe promised to report everything to Pineau and Mollet and to work out a practical plan of action. The main points agreed upon were:

France considers itself to be an interested party on this issue, and, as a partner, will call on the United States to live up to the agreement. It will not hesitate to make public the details in its possession, should it deem it necessary.

France will act to organise a united front of European countries. He agrees to approach Norway and Yugoslavia and will be in close contact with the Benelux countries.

France will unflinchingly stand by Israel in its uncompromising objection to the stationing of UNEF on its territory — a measure not mentioned at any stage of the negotiations and which is completely groundless.

France advises Israel to concentrate its efforts on opposing any attempt to station UNEF along its borders, since this was not the intention. Either UNEF controls Gaza, or the entire arrangement is pointless.

Israel should take care not to create the impression that it is resigned to the action taken in the Strip and will forcefully oppose only the entry of Egyptian armed forces. The threat of renewed hostilities is Israel's strongest weapon.

France does not take lightly the possibility of Russian military intervention by use of volunteers, and therefore caution must be exercised. If the conflict is renewed, Gaza is not a good reason for it, but rather passage in the Straits.

In a talk with Bourgès-Maunoury, he said that France was willing to stand by Israel, and explained that they were not acting solely for Israel. Their own public opinion would never understand or forgive them if France forsook Israel at this point, after having helped bring about the withdrawal agreement. They also understand that any concession made in Gaza will also affect the arrangement concerning the Canal.

Bourgès-Maunoury said that, should Israel be forced to take action, France will stand by it and offer military aid. In fact, France's options are limited, but they will nonetheless put them all at Israel's disposal.

He, too, sees the Straits as a test case. The French have prepared a number of small battleships in Djibouti that will be able to go into action with an advance notice of only a few days. He requests that Israel coordinate dates with them when deciding on sending a ship through the Straits.

Notes

1. The minister of foreign affairs stopped off for talks in Paris on her way to Washington.
2. See no. 535, note 5.
3. See no. 547, note 1. See also Eisenhower's reply to Mollet, *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 223, pp. 418–419.
4. See no. 454, note 8.
5. Yosef Ariel, the minister in Brussels.

553. J. Barmore (Warsaw) to A. Eshel. 16 March 1957

Coded Tel. 238; Inc.: 130.09/2306/12

Summary

Barmore replies to Eshel's telegram on repatriation to Poland.[1]

So far some 3,500 Jews had arrived from the Soviet Union, of whom about 2,000 have emigrated to Israel, and the remainder have passports and will emigrate in April. The rate of people returning, 250 per week, continues unchanged.

The restrictions were imposed by Poland's minister of internal affairs. Perhaps the minister of foreign affairs, who had come back from Moscow where he had been reprimanded by Khrushchev for letting Jews use the repatriation as a means to emigrate to Israel, had influenced the minister of internal affairs to put a stop to the emigration.

There are reports that Egypt is pressuring the Soviet Union to make sure that emigration from Poland to Israel is stopped.

The situation has caused panic and depression among the Jews. The Repatriation Committee has hinted that Jews may have to settle temporarily in Poland, receive identity cards and submit applications for emigration just like any other Polish citizen.

Barmore recommends taking no action but waiting for the return of the Polish delegation from Moscow. Then the Israel delegation will know whether the new limitation is temporary or is a harbinger of a new policy.

Note

1. Eshel requested figures on the number of Jews returning from the Soviet Union and on the reasons for the restrictions imposed on them (see Eshel to Barmore, Tel. 490, 14 March 1957, 130.09/2306/9).

554. D. Ben-Gurion (Jerusalem) to G. Meir (New York). 17 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA209; Outg.: 130.16/2955/12

Summary

Ben-Gurion instructs the foreign minister that if she speaks with Hammarskjöld (a conversation which he does not consider useful but does not oppose), she should tell him that so long as he does not bring from Egypt a clear pledge of non-belligerency, a promise of free passage for Israeli ships in the Suez Canal, free passage in the Straits, and settling its relations with Israel peacefully according to the U.N. Charter — she cannot discuss with him any demands he may make from Israel concerning Egypt.

Ben-Gurion further proposed to Eban not to approach Hammarskjöld until he delivers the above-mentioned pledges; and should the latter be unable to obtain them he must report to the United Nations that Nasser persists in violating the resolutions of the Security Council and the U.N. Charter.

555. M. Comay (New York) to J. Herzog. 17 March 1957

Coded Tel. XA653; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Comay reports on the foreign minister's talk with Pearson, also attended by Eban and himself.

After Meir reported on events in the Strip and the general mood in Israel, Pearson repeated what he had said to Eban[1] about the function of UNEF, adding that at the session of the Advisory Committee all the members except India had supported the secretary-general's position. The Canadian ambassador had also conveyed Canada's position to the State Department and claimed that the United States must speak to Nasser in no uncertain terms. If Nasser does not agree to leave internal security and the policing of Gaza in the hands of UNEF, Canada will pull out its forces and that would be the end of UNEF.

Meir claimed that Burns did not stand any chance of maintaining control of the Strip so long as an Egyptian general had taken up residence there with his entire entourage. Pearson replied that such an adverse conclusion is not yet evident to him nor to the rest of the world; he added that in such a unclear situation Israel must refrain from action, otherwise it may be difficult for its friends to support it and to act against Nasser.

Pearson conceded that at this point attention should be concentrated on Gaza, without pressuring Israel on stationing UNEF on its territory. He expressed his hope that should the Gaza question be resolved, Israel would not reject such an option out of hand.

At the end of the talk Meir wished to know who authorised the entry of Egyptian officials into Gaza, and Pearson promised to find out. He noted that if there is any attempt to interfere with navigation in the Gulf, responsibility will be clear-cut. As for the Suez Canal, he assumed that Israel plans to send a ship as a test-case, and suggested only that Israel wait until several other ships pass the Canal safely first.

Note

1. No. 551.

556. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington and the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 17 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNW211; Outg.: 130.09/2339/15

Summary

Herzog conveys to the embassy in Washington Ben-Gurion's response to the message from President Eisenhower[2] given to him by Lawson.

The prime minister thanked President Eisenhower for his message and said he hopes that the president's wishes and expectations will be fulfilled. At the same time, he cannot conceal Israel's anxiety over recent developments, and he must state that the secretariat of the United Nations is involved in the events that have unfolded. Despite its anxiety, Israel will not take any precipitate action and will not cause any further deterioration. However, Israel does expect the United States to bring all its influence to bear so that an exclusively U.N. administration is set up in Gaza Strip.

The prime minister added that he hopes it will not prove necessary to exercise Israel's right to a free hand, and he still hopes that the United States has enough influence to ensure this.

Lawson expressed his respect for Foreign Minister Meir and expressed his hope that her visit to the United States[3] will result in a clarification of matters. The visit demonstrates Israel's wish to explore all diplomatic avenues before reaching any fundamental decisions.[4]

The prime minister concluded with a description of the strain and distress felt by the population of the Negev settlements.

Notes

1. The telegram was not found, but a copy of it, dealing chiefly with Lawson's delivery of the message from Eisenhower to Ben-Gurion, appears in a telegram from Arad to Eban and Shiloah, DN13, 16 March 1957, 93.01/2186/3.
2. See no. 549.
3. See no. 548, note 1.
4. Compare Lawson's report on the meeting with Ben-Gurion, *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 230, pp. 429–430. In his report, Lawson stresses the importance of the president's message to the stability of the coalition in Israel.

557. M. Bartur (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Commerce and Industry. 17 March 1957

Copy: 130.06/1947/15

Summary

Bartur makes a suggestion about the loan from France and its participation in the oil pipeline:

France will give Israel a loan of 20–25 million dollars for a period of 10–15 years.

This loan would be used by Israel to buy steel from France and/or pipes and other equipment needed for building the 16 inch pipeline, based on a rough estimate of about 40% of the cost of building it, i.e., around 6–10 million dollars. The remainder of the money would serve to purchase raw materials, agricultural produce and equipment.

In return for the above Israel will undertake to provide to France, on demand, all the crude oil that can be delivered via the pipeline, less local consumption (meaning that there would be some 3–4 million tons left for France). Also, it would be possible to give France the option of buying a share of the pipeline within a period of time to be agreed upon in advance.

The loan would be payable in annual payments, the first of which would be dated one year after completion of the building of the pipeline and once oil is passing through it. If, due to force majeure, no oil passes through the pipeline, payment will be postponed.

Such an arrangement would not burden the French oil company because the pipeline is purely Israeli; on the other hand it answers France's political and security needs, since France too is interested in an alternative to the Suez Canal.

558. F. E. Shinnar (Cologne) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 17 March 1957

Coded Tel. 168; Inc.: 130.23/3099/25

Summary

Shinnar reports on a talk with Boehm about establishing diplomatic relations between West Germany and Israel.

Boehm said that von Brentano had reservations about the timing and highlighted all the implications involved: possible recognition of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) by the Arabs and the impact relations with Israel would have on German relations with the Soviet Union. In addition, Brentano thinks that the Israel mission and its head enjoy all the privileges of a regular diplomatic mission and there is constant communication between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the head of the mission on all matters. He fears that the establishment of relations with Israel might evoke harsh reactions by the many parties within Germany which oppose such a step and its repercussions, thus endangering the smooth operation of the reparations agreement.

According to Boehm, Brentano asked whether this would be desirable to Israel, considering present circumstances, and if it would not be better to wait for a more auspicious time. At the same time, Shinnar and Boehm are both aware that Dulles contacted Brentano on this issue and gave a positive recommendation.[2]

Notes

1. Erich Ollenhauer, head of the Social Democratic opposition in Germany, was the first German statesman ever invited on an official visit to Israel. He arrived in Israel on 18 March 1957 and was a guest of the government and the Mapai party.
2. Eban informed Eytan by telegram, on 13 March, as follows: "It seems that Dulles recommended to Brentano to establish diplomatic relations between Israel and [the Federal Republic of] Germany, based on my request, during one of the meetings that took place in Dulles' home. We were advised of this by a staff member of the German embassy. Please advise what the next step should be" (see Tel. WIA204, 93.01/2214/4).

559. Y. Avidar (Moscow) to the East European Division. 17 March 1957

Coded Tel. 950; Inc.: 130.02/2459/13

Summary

Avidar reports on his first meeting with Gromyko, after the latter was appointed as minister of foreign affairs of the Soviet Union.

Avidar opened by stating that, following the necessary defensive action Israel took in Sinai, the Soviet government saw fit to adopt a negative attitude towards it, and among other things completely stopped all commercial ties with Israel, including the annulling of contracts signed for 1957 and 1958,[3] and also recalled its

ambassador. He asked Gromyko what the chances for ties between the two countries would be in the foreseeable future.

Gromyko blamed Israel for the deterioration of relations between the two countries following Israel's attack on Egypt. In response, Avidar reviewed the acts of aggression perpetrated by Arab states against Israel since its establishment and the threat to its existence. He noted that the excuse for annulling the contracts was political and the Soviet Union had cut commercial ties and recalled its ambassador with regard to Israel alone, while at the same time signing an extensive trade agreement with France.

Gromyko noted that extending trade with France took place after the latter ended its military actions. He admitted that trade relations were indeed affected by political ones, and claimed that Israel's operation in Sinai could not be described as a defensive necessity. He evaded answering most of the points raised by Avidar and stressed that the two sides do not see eye to eye on the situation in the region and view Israel's conduct differently. In summing up he said that relations between the two counties depend only upon Israel's actions. The Soviet Union's stand is clear and its interest in peace cannot be doubted.

Notes

1. Andrei Gromyko was appointed to this position on 15 February, replacing Shepilov.
2. Nos. 83, 121.
3. See no. 75; no. 118, note 6.
4. See no. 118, note 3.

560. M. Touval (Budapest) to the East European Division. 17 March 1957

Copy: 130.23/3102/5

Summary

Touval reports on the increase in the rate of immigration from Hungary. The Hungarian authorities are now issuing a great number of passports. During the last two weeks some 30–40 passports were issued per day, later reaching a maximum of 57 per day. He expresses his concern that the authorities might stop this liberal approach. There is much jealousy on the part of the Christian population, as well as on the part of Western embassies. The pressure has had some effect, and the authorities are refusing to grant passports to young people.

There is no telling what the future may bring, so the legation is doing all that is in its power, and the entire staff is taking part in the effort to take advantage of this period to increase immigration.

Note

1. The first part of this document, not given here, describes the situation in Hungary after the quelling of the revolt.

561. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog. 18 March 1957

Coded Tel. XA660; Outg.: 93/01/2186/3

Summary

Kidron sums up the main points of the talk between the minister of foreign affairs and the U.N. secretary-general[1] which was also attended by Cordier, Eban, Rafael and himself.

Meir argued that handing over the administration of Gaza to Egypt is contrary to the assumptions on which the withdrawal was based and constitutes a danger to Israel's safety. The secretary-general responded that UNEF had no authority to prevent the entry of the Egyptian governor and his entourage. Egypt's rights to the Strip emanate from the armistice agreement, while its rights with regard to UNEF emanate from the U.N. Charter. If the states supporting Israel want to limit Egypt's rights or to increase the powers of UNEF they must pass a resolution in the Assembly. He admitted that appointing the governor only three days after the takeover was a hasty move which disappointed him. He said that "things went wrong."

He did not have a reasonable explanation as to why the decision to allow the governor to enter the Strip was not brought to the attention of members of the United Nations, including Israel, before it was acted upon.

The secretary-general maintained that the statement made by the foreign minister in the U.N. Assembly on 1 March did not make it clear that Israel opposed Egypt's entry into Gaza in any shape or form and to any extent.

As the talk continued, a heated argument ensued between Meir and the secretary-general on the issue of belligerency. Meir claimed that if Egypt is returning to the Strip on the basis of the armistice agreement this right no longer exists, since the right to belligerency does not belong in the agreement. She demanded that the secretary-general ask Nasser whether he considers himself to be at war with

Israel and publicise his answer. Hammarskjöld tried to evade giving an unequivocal answer.

When all excuses failed, Hammarskjöld agreed to pose the question to Nasser as a matter of principle during his next visit to Cairo. (In order to make any further evasions difficult, this question was to be handed to him in writing before he left.)[2]

In his talks with Nasser, Hammarskjöld will follow the line that UNEF will be stationed along the Armistice Demarcation Line, "with such ramifications and responsibilities in the Strip" as will enable it to carry out its duties along the border.

The foreign minister made it very clear that Israel would not agree to the stationing of UNEF inside Israel. The secretary-general claimed that he is not raising that issue now but it will eventually need to be addressed.

Should Egypt demand the evacuation of UNEF from Sharm el-Sheikh, he will bring the matter up for discussion in the Advisory Committee.

He has not yet decided whether he would be returning from Cairo via Jerusalem.

Notes

1. Eban wrote the following about the background to this meeting: "Originally, it was not her [Meir's] intention to meet with him at all. But after the Americans begged us and the U.N. Secretariat also requested it, we decided that the advantage gained by a pointed avoidance of such a meeting was not worthwhile as compared to having another opportunity of making our position publicly clear and putting pressure on Hammarskjöld (see *The Political Battle*, pp. 343–344).
   Hammarskjöld, on the other hand, postponed his departure for Cairo and talks with Nasser in order to meet with Foreign Minister Meir.
2. On 19 March Meir sent a letter to the secretary-general in which she demanded once again that he present Egypt with the question of its willingness to abstain from warfare at sea, on land and in the air. In addition, she told him that he was authorised to report to Egypt that Israel is willing to make a mutual commitment of non-belligerency with it (see Meir to Hammarskjöld, 19 March 1957, 93.03/3064/5).

562. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 19 March 1957

Coded Tel. WIA305; Inc.: 130.02/2459/15

Summary

Shiloah reports on the foreign minister's talk with Dulles, also attended by Eban, Herter, Phleger, Wilcox, Rountree, Bergus, Rafael and himself.

Meir began by making a comparison between the assumptions agreed between them with which she left the United States and the situation as it unfolded in Gaza. There were no doubts or misunderstandings concerning the premises based on which Israel evacuated the two regions and handed them over to the U.N. force. Similarly, there was no doubt about the severity with which Israel viewed any attempt at letting Egypt back into Gaza. Meir described the shock in Israel when, only a few days after the Assembly dispersed, all their premises and assumptions came to naught.

Israel had hoped that the United States would act in time to prevent Egypt's move, but it did not do so. There is no doubt that the Egyptians are back in Gaza, and UNEF is in effect merely watching over the Egyptian occupation of Gaza. This process is also accompanied by official statements made by Nasser on the destruction of Israel and the renewal of hostilities and the blockade. King Saud has also joined the campaign.[1]

Dulles said that matters are not unfolding as expected. In its talks with Israel, the United States said that it recognises Egypt's status in Gaza according to the armistice agreement. Therefore it thought that this grants Egypt the right to a token reassertion of occupancy. However, the United States did expect Egypt to accept U.N. de facto rule of Gaza. The United States has means of exerting pressure on Nasser which have hitherto not been employed to the full, and it is currently discussing how to do so. The difficulty lies in the fact that the United States must coordinate its efforts with those of the U.N. secretary-general in order to avoid duplication and contradictions between the measures used.

Meir said that she sees no point in speaking with Hammarskjöld,[2] and went on to analyse her own statement made at the U.N. Assembly. She described the process by which the declaration was written and how every word in it was thoroughly discussed with the United States and the French government and approved by them.

Eban remarked that it is necessary to restate the assumptions agreed on by Israel and the United States concerning the Strip. To prevent any misunderstanding, he re-read to the secretary the version that had been sent to the Israeli government. Dulles said that is a fair formulation of the U.S. view. He went on to say that Israel should not jump to the premature conclusion that its hopes are doomed and will not be fulfilled. So far there is no reason to think that the Strip will again serve as a base for Fedaiyun and that there will be interference with Israeli shipping. He hopes that Hammarskjöld, assisted by direct American action, may still turn the situation around. The United States has not yet found the proper way of bringing its full weight to bear on Egypt.

At this point the Israelis raised the issue of stationing a U.N. force on either side of the Armistice Demarcation Line, and the propaganda raging in the American press, inspired by anonymous officials of the State Department, portraying Israel's refusal to allow the stationing of UNEF units on the Israeli side of the border as the

obstacle to a solution. Dulles claimed he was not responsible for this and wished to know the reasons for Israel's objection.

The minister gave several reasons:

In principle, Israel cannot agree to the demand to stationing observers or forces in Nitzana while the armistice agreement has been violated by Egypt and thus become a dead letter.

In practical terms, responsible and effective guarding of the border depends on the good will of the governments involved.

Israel, because of its small area and its settlements near the border, cannot agree to being surrounded by a foreign army.

Dulles proposed to agree on a statement that would be given to the press and a joint press release was worded.[5] In conclusion, Dulles asked once more that Israel not lose patience and hope, especially when it is backed by the United States.

Notes

1. An official Saudi spokesman announced on 16 March that Saudi Arabia would not let Israeli ships sail through the Straits of Tiran. The spokesman said that the Straits serve for the passage of Muslim pilgrims to Mecca, the Gulf of Aqaba is a closed gulf within the territorial waters of Arab countries and the Straits are not even mentioned in the 1888 Constantinople Treaty. The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs repeated these statements in an official statement on 31 March which was relayed to the U. S. embassy in Jeddah (see Editorial Note, *FRUS, 1957*, Vol. XVII, no. 259, p. 498).
2. See no. 561, note 1.
3. For details about Hammarskjöld's visit to the Middle East in April 1956, see Vol. 11, no. 218.
4. See no. 454, note 8.
5. The text of the joint declaration is found in file 130.02/2459/13. Eban attributed considerable consequence to this statement compared with previous declarations and pledges made by the United States, since it placed these declarations and pledges beyond all doubt (see *The Political Battle*, p. 342). See also no. 568.

563. G. Rafael (New York) to J. Tsur (Paris). 19 March 1957

Coded Tel. NPA454; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Rafael reports that in a talk with Georges-Picot,[1] Foreign Minister Meir asked that the French government make the following declaration, based on the American-Israeli declaration of the previous day[2]: that France too had assumed that it was clear that the U.N. was assuming full responsibility for the administration and internal

security in Gaza; that France expressed its serious concern over the deterioration of the situation brought about by the arrival of the Egyptian governor and stated that as far as it understands, Israel is allowed to defend its rights while the U.N. has fully or partially abandoned its responsibility — all in line with the statement that Pineau sent to the prime minister from Ottawa.[3]

Furthermore, Meir asked that France call on the United States to exert its full power on Nasser and refrain from supporting compromise proposals, such as stationing a U.N. force on either side of the border.

Israel has submitted an official request[4] to the U.N. secretary-general, asking him, during his visit to Cairo, to request a reply from Egypt on the latter's willingness to end the state of belligerency with Israel with all its implications. Meir asked that France pressure the United States to demand a clear answer from Egypt on this issue.

Rafael urges Tsur to act immediately so that the French government should express its opinion[5] before the opening of the summit conference in Bermuda.[6]

Notes

1. See no. 312, note 1.
2. See no. 562.
3. See no. 512, Appendix.
4. See no. 561, note 2.
5. Tsur replied to this telegram saying that he had received a promise that Pineau would include a firm declaration on the commitment of France and the United States on the issue of Gaza, in line with his message from Ottawa, in his speech at the next session of the National Assembly, and also a clear demand from Egypt to take an unequivocal stand on the matter of belligerency rights (see Tsur to Eytan, Tel. 875, 20 March 1957, 72.2/915/30).
6. See no. 454, note 8.

564. A. Eban (New York) to the United States Division. 20 March 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA345; Outg.: 93.01/2188/10

Summary

1. Eban sums up the talks held by the foreign minister, Shiloah and himself with Clay, with McCloy and with Arthur Dean. All three Americans stressed that despite the complications, Israel has grown stronger following its decision on withdrawal, considering the obligation undertaken by the United States. Should

Israel have to defend itself, it will now face a totally different reaction to that to which it had been accustomed heretofore. The alternative, i.e., an Israeli attempt to remain in Gaza and the Straits against the wish of the entire world — would have led to disaster.

2. Clay explained that the priorities of the United States are as follows:
   a) The Gulf of Aqaba, which the United States recognises as a supreme interest which Israel has the full right to protect militarily;
   b) Prevention of acts of aggression and infiltration from Gaza by efficient use of a U.N. force;
   c) Passage in the Suez Canal.
3. The three advised that should Israel find itself compelled to exercise its right to self defence in Gaza, it is vital that it do so while it is crystal clear that Egypt is to blame for the renewal of danger in the region. Cutting off Gaza from Egypt is not a difficult task militarily and therefore the circumstances determining the decision to act must be chiefly political.
4. Dean and Clay hinted at some American resentment towards Hammarskjöld and Bunche for having accepted Egypt's move before the powers had a chance to have their say.
5. McCloy recounted that several weeks earlier he had volunteered to go to Cairo to sort out the Canal issue before its opening, but Hammarskjöld refused on the grounds that the Israeli evacuation had not been completed. McCloy claimed that this fact would, on the contrary, give him the necessary leverage, but Hammarskjöld persisted in his refusal.
6. McCloy advises the United States and the United Nations to begin negotiations on the operation of the Canal in political terms before its clearing is completed. He has raised a million dollars from maritime nations with no strings attached,[1] but on the assumption and expectation that not only would the money be returned but that international law and order will prevail in the Canal.
7. Dean said that there is no doubting the president's intention to make Nasser pay, but it is his way to avoid head-on confrontation, as he had done against McCarthy.[2] This does not mean he is a weak person; it is merely a fact that he prefers indirect and patient ways of conflict management.
8. Dean left for Washington after the talk, and conveyed to the Israelis a message from Dulles that he remains true to the joint declaration and is reasonably hopeful that the arrangement in Gaza will satisfy Israel's main needs and will be in essence an international one. He will review the proposals submitted to Herter,[3] and in light of the results of the secretary-general's talks in Cairo will telephone next week.

Notes

1. McCloy served as the advisor to Hammarskjöld on funding the clearance operations in the Suez Canal, and in effect raised the necessary funds.
2. Senator Joseph McCarthy headed the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and in this capacity initiated and conducted from 1950 on a campaign of investigation and persecution of communists and their sympathisers who, he claimed, had made their way surreptitiously into the State Department. He particularly attacked the liberals in universities, arts and the media and created an atmosphere of witch hunt. In 1954 he also accused senior military officers and even cast aspersions on President Eisenhower, who became his sworn enemy.
3. See no. 569.

565. M. Rivlin (New York) to the United States Division. 20 March 1957

Copy: 93.08/407/18

Summary

Rivlin[1] reports on an urgent meeting of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, attended by Foreign Minister Meir. After a detailed review given by the minister, members embarked on a discussion of measures to be taken.

Most of the representatives said that the joint declaration published by the secretary of state and the minister of foreign affairs[2] misled a large part of the Jewish public as well as the general public into thinking that all was going smoothly and that full agreement has been achieved between the two parties.

It was decided to publish a joint statement, to make sure the facts receive as wide publicity as possible, organise the dispatch of telegrams and letters to the State Department, to get senators to take action and also to broadcast special announcements on radio and television. All such announcements should stress that the United States must prove its support of Israel's assumptions and expectations by action, and that words alone are not sufficient. They have already embarked on sending telegrams and information material to Jewish communities throughout the United States. Other modes of action will also be explored.

All those present were unanimous in their opinion that swift and comprehensive action is called for. Bitterness was rife and willingness to act prevailed. Not one of the members tried to justify or explain away the inactivity of the United States after the recent developments.

Notes

1. Moshe Rivlin, consul for information at the consulate in New York.
2. No. 562.

566. R. Pilpoul (Addis Ababa) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 20 March 1957

Coded Tel. 238; Inc.: 130.15/3740/9

Summary

As he had promised Tamrat, the emperor of Ethiopia gave Pilpoul an audience. Pilpoul saw this talk as an opportunity to find out whether there had been any change in Ethiopia's attitude towards Israel. The talk was conducted in a friendly atmosphere.

In his arguments for recognising Israel, Pilpoul pointed out that strengthening Israel's status in the world and in Ethiopia means damaging Nasser, and that recent events proved that Arab blackmail did not yield the desired results: Germany did not suffer any hardship as a result of its reparations payments, nor did Laos and the Philippines, which recognised Israel in the midst of the Sinai campaign; nor Ghana, which despite the Egyptian delegation's manouevres has determined to exchange ambassadors and is contemplating signing a trade agreement with Israel.

The emperor gave some details which he learnt during his visit to Burma, about Burma's firm stand against Egypt's threats. He confirmed he has no intention of going back on his word, which he gave to Pilpoul some time ago, and will therefore instruct his foreign minister to invite him to discuss details of the recognition. The emperor did, however, complain bitterly that Israel's interest in his country is limited to commercial ties, and it is doing nothing to develop industry and agriculture in Ethiopia by setting up suitable plants. He added that such actions could bolster his arguments in favour of the policy of recognition and rapprochement and would rob the opposition to this policy of their arguments.

Another subject discussed was the stopover of E.A.L. (Ethiopian Air Lines) in Lod airport (Tel. 75 of the Economic Division).[3] The emperor voiced his support and will issue suitable instructions.

At the end of the talk the emperor said that if Pilpoul encounters any difficulties in his talks with the foreign minister he may apply to him directly.

Notes

1. In this telegram of 7 March Pilpoul reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a talk with Tamrat on the subject of recognising Israel. (The telegram is in file 130.07/2459/13).
2. The telegram was not found.
3. The telegram was not found.
4. Pilpoul was not invited to a reception in honour of Richard Nixon, the vice president of the United States, which took place in the emperor's palace, even though he was acting head of Israel's delegation in Ethiopia at the time (see Pilpoul to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel. 67, 12 March 1957, 130.09/3740/9).

567. Y. Shimoni (Rangoon) to the Asian and African Division. 20 March 1957

Orig.: 130.23/3096/22

Summary

Shimoni reports on his talks with the prime minister of Burma and the minister of foreign affairs. The official and chief objective of his visit was to congratulate U Nu on his return to power.[1]

Shimoni told the prime minister that he must be aware that Burma's attitude towards the problems in the Middle East during the past four months had caused Israel pain. Many were asking whether Israel-Burma relations had not suffered from these events. U Nu firmly denied such a possibility and claimed that Burma's friendship towards Israel is intact and is not liable to be damaged by events in the tactical and political arenas.

Shimoni pointed out that Burma's stand in the U.N. did not always reflect such total and loyal friendship. For example, on the issue of sanctions: ultimately, the subject did not reach the voting stage, but Israel was told by the Burmese that had the matter been put to a vote, they would have voted for sanctions. U Nu did not deny that they would have done so. But voting at the U.N. did not damage the friendly relations between Burma and Israel, as demonstrated by the fact that all their joint ventures are proceeding as usual, and there has been no hint that Burma is holding them back or giving them up. The press, too, on the whole showed a very friendly attitude towards Israel. They must vote and act as dictated by their interests and views.

Shimoni explained that as a statesman located far away from the Middle East, it is easy for U Nu to separate between Burma's vote in the U.N. and its friendship with Israel. But for an Israeli, for whom these are life-and-death issues, it is not so

simple to make such a distinction. U Nu said that for him and his colleagues, the separation between the two areas is a fact.

Shimoni wished to hear from U Nu about Burma's stand and attitude during the coming months. It is very important to Israel to be able to feel sure that — now that it has conceded to U.N. pressure and withdrawn, out of trust in the U.N. and the nations of the world — it can rely on Burma's support. He expects Burma to join those countries that are placing themselves squarely on the side of defence of freedom of navigation, be it by a declaration only, by stating that it will send its own ship, or by expressing support for Israel's right to employ force to defend its freedom of passage.

U Nu asked a few questions requesting facts and explanations, expressed his general moral support for the principle of freedom of navigation, but asked that he be given some time and not be expected to provide a serious pledge then and there, since he would need to consult with the minister of foreign affairs and the other ministers before giving his opinion on such an important and binding issue.

Shimoni also reports on talks he held with the minister of foreign affairs and the director-general of the Foreign Ministry, Barrington. Both thought that once the General Assembly had dispersed, there was no point in Burma's declaring support for Israel, but they did express their support of Israel's stand on the issue of the Gulf of Aqaba. On the other hand, the Gaza issue is a far more complicated one and Israel cannot expect Burma to present a simple and unambiguous stand.[4]

Notes

1. See Shimoni to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel. 680, 18 March 1957, 130.23/3096/22.
2. See no. 265, note 2.
3. Paragraph 1, omitted here, deals with detailed plans for economic cooperation between Israel and Burma.
4. See also Shimoni's memorandum of 20 March: "Is there a crisis of confidence between Burma and Israel?" (in file 93.13/231/20), in which he discusses the reasons for the ambivalent relations between Burma and Israel.

568. G. Rafael (New York) to J. Herzog. 21 March 1957

Orig.: 130.02/2459/13

Summary

Rafael reports on the visit of the foreign minister to New York.

The point of the trip was to find out what policy the United States would adopt in light of developments in Gaza, whether the United States is prepared to fulfil its obligations and what steps it would take to do so. Further objectives were to arouse public opinion against Nasser's provocations and to prepare it for the possibility that Israel may have to exercise its right to self defence.

When Meir left for New York, there was no certainty that the United States would not renege on its commitments or its declared policy of support for the assumptions which formed the basis for the withdrawal.

Early on in the talk between Meir and Dulles, the latter was evasive and perhaps even tried to evade the aforementioned commitments. Meir's clear and firm position pre-empted such an attempt, especially when she reminded him that she had checked with the French prime minister whether her interpretation of the assumptions is correct and obtained his full confirmation.

In the joint statement made following the meeting, the joint policy of the United States and Israel was confirmed anew with regard to the three issues of: Gaza, Aqaba and Suez. This statement is more explicit than earlier American statements regarding the U.N.'s responsibility for Gaza. This is the first expression of U.S. concern over developments since the withdrawal, and it is important that such concern was expressed jointly with Israel.[1]

However, there is no guarantee that there is an understanding with the United States on ways and means of implementing this joint policy. Rafael believes that the State Department will continue supporting compromise solutions, while acquiescing in the fait accompli meanwhile established by Nasser. The United States is interested in maintaining a U.N. force in the region and will therefore do all in its power to ensure it remains there, even if for that end it will have to pressure Israel to agree to it being stationed — even in token form — on its side of the border as well.

Notwithstanding the growing understanding in American public opinion and within the Administration that Israel is entitled to react to Nasser's provocations, it should be kept in mind that any military action on Israel's part will win support only if it comes in response to a blatant act of war for which Egypt is clearly responsible.

The second objective — that of preparing public opinion and enlisting it against Nasser — was fully achieved after Meir's dramatic trip, her meetings with Dulles and Hammarskjöld, her numerous talks with senior journalists and prominent public figures.

As a result of this trip some steps were taken also towards the third objective — preparing public opinion for the possibility of further military action against Nasser.

Notes

1. See no. 562.

2. No. 569.
3. Article VII of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement deals with reducing the forces of both sides and a mutual withdrawal on the western and the eastern fronts. Article VIII in the agreement defines the boundaries of the demilitarised zone on the border between the two countries (see Vol. 3, Appendix 6).

569. A. Eban (New York) to the United States Division. 21 March 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA347; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Eban reports on a talk with Herter, also attended by Shiloah, Rafael and Rountree. He raised the following issues:

1) **Belligerency rights**
Eban stressed the importance of approaching Egypt via the secretary-general,[1] and called upon the United States to support Israel's efforts to obtain an unambiguous statement from Egypt.

2) **Gaza**
Eban proposed to convey to Nasser that UNEF will take responsibility for security on the Israel-Gaza border only if it is also given security and administrative responsibility inside the Strip. He suggested that, if the U.N. deems it possible to maintain civil administration in the Strip despite recent events, it would have to appoint a commissioner for civil affairs in keeping with the secretary-general's report of 8 March,[2] a step which would undermine and weaken the authority of the Egyptian governor. Eban further proposed that the United States should explain to Nasser that Israel is earnest about its determination to protect its rights, and should Israel embark on another war as a result of his provocations and he fails again, the United States will not be able to save him.

3) **Eilat**
It was agreed that Israel will submit drafts of memoranda on its right to self defence based on the 1 March version proposed by Dulles and Phleger,[3] so that the exchange of memoranda may be accomplished immediately upon Dulles' return from Bermuda. Eban will advise Herter on the approach of a ship flying an American flag to the Straits. Eban requested Herter to give an encouraging response when American or French companies approach him with regard to the oil pipeline. Herter agreed to do so. Eban stressed that it is vital to prevent a repeat in Sharm el-Sheikh of what happened in Gaza, where U.N. officials left it, i.e., not to allow a fait accompli emerge by letting UNEF leave the area.

Herter repeated Lodge's statement of 2 February[4] and promised the utmost watchfulness.

4. **Suez**

Eban recounted his talk with McCloy[5] and stressed that it is important that the United States raise the issue of Israeli navigation through the Canal before the clearing is completed. He mentioned that the reference to the six principles in the Dulles-Meir joint declaration[7] proves that these principles cover the issue of free passage for Israel. Herter confirmed this assumption.

Herter promised to bring the above proposal to the attention of the secretary of state, though with regard to Eilat he immediately stated his approval of the statements made. He said that, with reference to Gaza, reports from General Burns illustrate that in practice control in all vital areas are in the hands of the U.N. and the Egyptian governor is not doing much. The United States is influencing the secretary-general to stress the U.N.'s authority in all main areas as much as possible, and will remain in constant touch with him during his visit to Cairo.

Notes

1. See no. 561.
2. See Editorial Note no. 526.
3. See Editorial Note no. 490.
4. See Editorial Note no. 376.
5. See no. 564.
6. See no. 450.
7. See no. 562.

570. A. Eban (New York) to the United States Division. 21 March 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA346; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Eban reports that Lodge paid a visit to the minister of foreign affairs before she left for Israel. The meeting was also attended by Eban, Kidron and Rafael.

Lodge said he was shocked and surprised by Nasser's move appointing a governor. The U.N. secretary-general and the United States had reason to believe that Egypt would retain its right without actually exercising it. However, he believes all is not lost and it may be possible to reach an arrangement in Gaza that would both ensure Israel's security and highlight the U.N.'s authority.

In Lodge's opinion there has been a shift for the better in Israel's status in the U.N. and in world public opinion. Any hostile act by Egypt on land or sea will now be met with a strong reaction by the U.S. and the U.N. Assembly — which was not the case several weeks ago. In his view, it is not impossible to achieve a two-thirds majority in the Assembly against hindering an Israeli ship in the Suez Canal or an extreme action by Egypt in Gaza. Even if an ordinary majority is obtained it will still enhance Israel's political status, and should Israel be forced to take action on its own, its move will be more readily understood. Therefore he recommends not hesitating about applying to the Assembly. It is perfectly clear to him that should Egypt shoot at ships in the Gulf, Israel will respond with the use of force. But in the Canal Egypt will not employ force, and therefore it would be advisable for Israel to bring Egypt before the U.N. Assembly as a first stage.

Lodge wanted Israel's reply to the following question: if Israel had to choose between UNEF leaving under Nasser's pressure and UNEF remaining, if the troops are given leave to cross to the Israeli side too at certain defined and agreed points — why does Israel not prefer the second option? The minister gave a full explanation of Israel's stand on this issue. Lodge stressed that he was not raising this issue officially; however public opinion does not understand Israel's considerations.

571. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 22 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA235; Inc.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Tekoah describes the situation in Gaza as reflected in reports coming from the region. Contrary to the U.N. secretary-general's announcement of 22 February to the effect that civil and military administration responsibility will be initially given exclusively to UNEF, and that there will be an interim period when the U.N. will have special administrative authority in the Strip, U.N. authority has not been exercised at all, practically from Day One. The civil administration organised itself without any connection to the U.N. and immediately saw itself as subordinate to the Egyptian government. As soon as the Egyptian governor arrived on 14 March, the administration began functioning according to his direct orders. The local police is currently also under direct Egyptian command. In effect, UNEF are left with no functions within the Strip, except for guarding U.N. and UNWRA facilities, and even these are being replaced by local guards. Practically all U.N. troops have been cleared out of towns and villages and have been stationed along the Armistice Demarcation Line and even here their authority is highly limited. Though they have

been charged with preventing infiltration they are not allowed to open fire except in self defence. As in the past, they have no jurisdiction, therefore their measures against infiltration are ineffective.

In the last few days before the IDF withdrawal from the Strip and immediately thereafter, UNEF and UNWRA representatives displayed interest in establishing economic ties with Israel. The discussions were discontinued after the U.N. announced that new instructions had been received from New York. The process of Egypt's take-over of the administration of the Strip is reflected in a series of statements by U.N. spokesmen and Egyptian statements which were not denied by the U.N.[1]

Note

1. The reference is to Circular Tel. 939 of 22 March 1957 from Tekoah, which describes in detail the step-by-step takeover by Egypt of the civil and military administration in the Gaza Strip (in file 130.09/2377/5).

572. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 22 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA236; Inc.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Eytan advises the embassy that the minister of foreign affairs has returned from New York and gone to meet the prime minister. On her way through Rome she read in the newspaper a report from Bermuda to the effect that the United States and Britain had agreed on an Egyptian administration in Gaza and on stationing UNEF troops on both sides of the border.[1] Eytan relays to Eban Meir's request that he meet with Herter and convey her shock. Eban must demand Herter's explicit assurance that the report is groundless, since the secretary of state assured her clearly that stationing U.N. troops on Israeli territory would not be discussed at the conference.

Note

1. See no. 454, note 8. In fact, this issue was not discussed at the Bermuda conference.

573. Y. Meroz (Washington) to J. Herzog (Jerusalem) and M. Kidron (New York). 24 March 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA248; Outg.: 93.01/2214/4

Summary

Meroz conveys the main points of his talk with Bergus, also attended by Rafael:

1) Bergus supposes that a delegation of the Export-Import Bank will soon be on its way to Israel.
2) The reports from Cairo[1] indicate that Hammarskjöld is increasingly despairing of Nasser. The Egyptian attitude which seems to be forming is as follows:
   a) Suez Canal transit fees: twenty-five per cent will be used for development purposes, five per cent to shareholders, and the rest to Egypt.
   b) Passage of Israeli ships through the Canal: Egypt is attempting to obtain a ruling from the International Court of Justice in The Hague, and until then is steadfast in its refusal.
   c) The Gulf of Aqaba: Egypt apparently will not act to prevent the passage of Israeli shipping in the Gulf, and will assign responsibility for implementation to Saudi Arabia.[2]
   d) Gaza: Egypt wants UNEF to remain in the Strip at all costs. The question of stationing UNEF troops on both sides of the Armistice Demarcation Line was not discussed.
   e) The U.N. secretary-general did not receive any reply to his question on belligerency.
3) In reply to Meroz's question as to the significance of the Bermuda statements[3] referring to U.N. resolutions on Gaza and Aqaba, Bergus said that it was a reiteration of the U.S. declared stand on the Israeli government's assumptions and expectations.
4) The Israelis raised the question of the future of Jordan, stressing that, should the Iraqi army enter Jordan, Israel will see it as a serious event that may compel it to take far-reaching measures. Bergus said that under the present circumstances the United States wishes to ensure the influence of four factors in Jordan — Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United States and Britain. Such a balance, he believes, is the only key to the continued existence of Jordan without undermining the inter-Arab balance of power.

Notes

1. Hammarskjöld left for Cairo on 19 March and stayed there for a week. He held three talks with Nasser, in which the following topics were discussed: the distribution of the

Suez Canal transit fees once the Canal reopened; the passage of Israeli ships through the Canal; the future of UNEF and Egypt's demand that it also be deployed on Israel's territory and the status of the Gaza Strip. These talks ended without reaching an agreement.

2. See no. 562, note 1.
3. See no. 454, note 8.

574. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division and the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 25 March 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA247; Inc.: 130.09/2314/7

Summary

The embassy reports, based on information given to Arad:

1) The U.N. secretary-general's reports from Cairo[1] reveal rigidity on the part of Egypt both with respect to the plan of the Four on transit dues[2] and with respect to the passage of Israeli ships. The Egyptians do not conduct negotiations but rather lecture on their plans. The secretary-general did not send an additional proposal for review by the users.
2) It was agreed in Bermuda[4] not to decide at this point on measures to be taken if the Four's plan is rejected by Nasser. It was decided to set up a British-American coordination committee that would work on proposals. It was agreed that boycotting the Suez Canal is not practical. The alternative plans being considered are increasing the output of Tapline (the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company) and IPC (Iraq Petroleum Company). Building a pipeline to Turkey and building large tankers are long-term plans. The idea of an Israeli pipeline was deemed impractical on political grounds.

Notes

1. See no. 573, note 1.
2. See no. 534, note 1; no. 535, note 5.
3. In March, Krishna Menon met with Nasser in Cairo for talks about the problems of navigation through the Suez Canal and the Gaza Strip.
4. See no. 454, note 8.

575. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. 26 March 1957

Coded Tel. WNTA249; Outg.: 93.01/2186/1

Summary

The embassy reports on a series of meetings held by representatives of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations with leaders of Congress.[1]

The representatives were received warmly, with many promises of support and action on Israel's behalf, mainly renewal of economic aid. Knowland and Johnson promised swift action on removing the restrictions on travel to Israel.

All senators expressed their view that Israel's moral standing is now higher than ever before, and even if it should be compelled to take military action it will still enjoy general sympathy.

Note

1. See no. 565.

576. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 26 March 1957

Coded Tel. 909; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on Eshkol's talks in Paris.[1]

1) In a talk with Ramadier, after a serious argument, it was agreed in principle to extend the period of the loan as much as possible and reduce the interest rate. Ramadier promised to issue suitable instructions to the officials. With regard to the pipeline, his political objections have weakened, but he still sees considerable financial obstacles. After some inquiries he agreed in principle to the idea of providing credit for building a 16 inch pipe out of the loan of 30 million dollars, and trying to convert this credit into a long-term loan. He insisted, however, that France's involvement would be covert and that the responsibility would be Israel's alone. It was agreed that Eshkol would meet him again on his return from London.

2) In a visit with Emile Roche,[2] who is preparing to come to Israel, the latter said that the industrialists who were to accompany him had dropped out on the pretext that it would damage France's standing in the Arab countries. He added that, to the best of his knowledge, Wormser of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs[3] has been putting pressure on them in that vein. Roche plans to go on his trip as scheduled, together with a small group of senior officials and bank representatives, including the Lazard Frères bank.

3) In a talk with Mollet, the latter announced that there is a clear government decision on France's participation in the pipeline project. He is willing to give Eshkol a letter to Ben-Gurion formally confirming this decision, as well as to mention the matter in his forthcoming speech in the Chamber of Deputies. He is certain that he will be able to overcome Ramadier's opposition which stems mainly from pressure by his advisors. He also promised to contact the Lazard bank forthwith and advise them of the French government's support for the pipeline plan. The Israelis asked for an explicit decision by the French government on long-term credit of at least 15 years, for 10 million dollars, and priority in purchasing steel and pipes. Mollet promised to present these requests at the government meeting and to meet with Eshkol to tell him of the results of these discussions.

Notes

1. Eshkol arrived in Paris on 21 March and took part in a conference organised by *Keren HaYesod* (United Israel Appeal) as a demonstration of solidarity with Israel by the Jewish communities in Europe. He also held talks on France's participation in building the oil pipeline and the loan that France was to make available to Israel.
2. Emile Roche, chairman of the economic and social council (Conseil Economique et Social), an official body advising the government on economic issues.
3. Olivier Wormser, deputy director-general for finance and economics in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

577. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 27 March 1957

Circ. Tel. 951; Outg.: 130.02/2459/13

Summary

Tekoah calls attention to the announcement made by the U.N. spokesman in Cairo on 26 March, in which he confirms that UNEF units in the Gaza Strip have been

removed from the cities and stationed on the border and that UNEF no longer has any administrative control of the Strip.

He further recalls that Pearson made an announcement in parliament that Canada believes that U.N. forces cannot be expected to prevent raids and infiltration along the border if it does not have the necessary control inside the Strip.[2] Depriving UNEF of its administrative authority in Gaza and the fact that its official powers to prevent infiltration are limited undermine the value of its presence in Gaza. Placing UNEF along the border is no substitute for U.N. administration of Gaza.

The fact that Hammarskjöld apparently was unable to change Nasser's attitude towards UNEF in Gaza marks a turning point in the existence of UNEF and may signal its final collapse.

Nasser's policy on this issue reflects a consistent process aimed at stripping UNEF of any practical value and turning it into a tool for weakening Israel's defence along its borders. By refusing to put an end to the state of belligerency against Israel, and by removing UNEF from the Suez Canal area, most of Sinai and Gaza, Nasser has secured for himself full freedom of action to pursue acts of hostility without any interference from UNEF, which cannot prevent Egyptian military preparations or infiltration through U.N. held lines.

Notes

1. See no. 571.
2. Pearson warned that Canada would pull out its troops from UNEF if Nasser did not let these forces carry out the functions for which they were sent to the Gaza Strip in the first place.

578. Z. Argaman (Washington) to the United States Division. 27 March 1957

Coded Tel. WIA346; Outg.: 93.01/2214/4

Summary

Argaman gives an account of his talk with Wilkins,[1] also attended by Bergus. Wilkins reviewed the discussions in Bermuda[2] and said that paragraphs 8 and 9 of the joint statement reflect the agreement between Britain and the United States on the need to carry out U.N. resolutions regarding the Gaza Strip, the Straits and the Canal, but there was no decision on joint measures to be taken in case of Egyptian non-compliance. Referring to Dulles' statement,[3] Wilkins said that in their opinion stationing a U.N. force on the Israeli side as well would help to achieve the aim

of preventing hostilities between the two parties. Argaman firmly rejected this assumption, brought up the reasons given by the minister of foreign affairs in her talk with the secretary of state[4] and said that the taking of this approach by the United States only served to encourage Nasser and increase his intransigence.

Wilkins went on to discuss the issue of the Canal and the Straits and said that they are waiting for Hammarskjöld's report before debating the next steps to be taken to exercise free navigation. In this context he mentioned the option of applying to the International Court of Justice in The Hague, requesting its ruling on the question of Egypt's claim to belligerency rights. Argaman replied that the entire idea of applying to the Court, as raised by the secretary and Wilkins, is distressing and in clear contradiction to the U.S. position as reflected so far in talks and documents. The right of passage in the Canal and through the Straits has been determined by the Security Council, in the statement made by Israel's minister of foreign affairs in the U.N. Assembly and the statements made by the United States and other countries. Anyone calling that right into question must apply to the Court, but until then freedom of navigation must be acted upon, and Israel will surely do so with the confidence that the United States will not deny its own position on the matter. Wilkins asked if Israel intends to send a ship through the Canal and Argaman replied that the foreign minister and the ambassador, in their talks with the secretary and his aide, had left them in no doubt that it will do so when the time comes.

With regard to the situation in the Gaza Strip, Wilkins said that reports of Egyptian takeover were exaggerated, that in fact the U.N. has actual control, and that for the time being Egypt has ceased its takeover efforts. Argaman claimed that his reports say precisely the opposite and that administrative control is completely in the hands of Egypt.

In conclusion Wilkins expressed the hope that the prohibition on travel to Israel would soon be lifted and that on economic matters they are close to implementation.

Notes

1. Fraser Wilkins, director of the Office of Middle Eastern Affairs in the State Department.
2. See no. 454, note 8.
3. In a press conference on 26 March Dulles said that UNEF deployment on both sides of the border would contribute to peace in the region.
4. See no. 568.
5. See no. 582.

579. S. Kaddar (Prague) to the Director of the East European Division. 27 March 1957

Coded Tel. 10; Inc.:130.09/2343/7

Summary

Kaddar reports on the arrest and detention of Moshe Shatz, an employee of *Tahal* (the Foreign Ministry's overseas wireless station) who also worked part-time for *Bilu*,[1] while he was paying a call on a local Jewish contact.[2] Shatz was accused of contacts with the local Jews and of smuggling American merchandise which was planted in the apartment. He refused to sign the police report and declared that he would answer questions only in the presence of the Israeli minister. He was then released.

Kaddar assumes that he will soon be summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and requests guidelines on how to act. Kaddar proposes the following: to protest vehemently against the assault on the immunity of a holder of a diplomatic passport by handcuffing him and rude behaviour towards him and to respond sharply should they attempt to link the legation's activities with "spying for the United States." If they mention the distribution of funds, he thinks he should admit that Israel helps the needy, but claim that it never asked for anything in return for financial help.

Kaddar also asks that a new Tahal representative be sent as soon as possible, because Shatz is sure to be deported within a short while.[3]

Notes

1. *Bilu* was the previous name of *Nativ*, the organisation responsible for contact with Jews behind the Iron Curtain.
2. Local Jews who served as contacts in charge of distributing Israeli information material in the community.
3. On 31 March an official announcement was published in Prague on the deportation of Shatz, on the pretext of his contacts with Czech citizens for the purpose of buying information and passing it on to representatives of a foreign power, i.e., espionage (see Kaddar to the East European division, Tel. 21, 31 March 1957, 130.09/2343/7). Israel claimed that Shatz' arrest was planned and staged for purposes of intimidation — to deter legation staff from contacting local Jews (see the East European division to the Israel legation in Prague, Tel. 108, 10 April 1957, 130.23/3120/4).
   In response, on 2 April 1957 Israel declared Jaromir Vasicek, the attaché in the Czech legation in Israel, persona non grata and demanded that he leave within 48 hours. The reason given was "incontrovertible evidence of extensive espionage activities carried out by the said attaché while abusing his diplomatic status." (The statement is in file 130.23/3120/4.)

580. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 28 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA245; Inc.: 93.01/2214/4

Summary

Herzog comments on the PTS[1] news agency report that Kidron had sent Cordier[2] an official letter inviting the U.N. secretary-general to visit Israel. In his view, even though it may be useful to try and counteract Israel's image as sabotaging the secretary-general's visit to Egypt, this could have been achieved by a message saying that if the secretary wishes to visit Israel he will be welcome. The damage in the news report is threefold:

Giving an invitation to the secretary-general after he had visited Egypt and passed over Israel is demeaning;

If he was invited and did not come it means he turned down the invitation, which does not reflect well on Israel;

The report is not in line with the statement made by the U.N. spokesman,[3] which is much closer to the truth.

Notes

1. The Palestine Telegraph Service.
2. Andrew Cordier, the administrative aide to the U.N. secretary-general.
3. The U.N.'s version was that Hammarskjöld was returning directly from Cairo to New York because he had not been invited to visit Israel.

581. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 28 March 1957

Coded Tel. TNWA246; Inc.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

The United States division reports that, following the entry of Saudi forces to Aqaba,[1] Tekoah will raise the question of violation of the armistice agreement[2] with Colonel Leary but will refrain from mentioning freedom of navigation so as to prevent any further damage by the secretary-general. Israel is refraining from a public response so as not to shift attention from Egypt to Saudi Arabia; the main

concern is to avoid any impression of tension in the Gulf which might deter ships from arriving.

At the same time, prompt action should be taken at the State Department. Israel should bring up the issue and inquire what measures the United States has taken to ensure that the Saudis will do no harm.[3]

Notes

1. Following the revocation of the agreement between Britain and Jordan on 13 March 1957 (see no. 282, note 4), Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia decided that the Saudi army would be deployed in Aqaba, replacing the British units that were stationed in the military base there. The Saudi forces entered Jordan on 26 March.
2. The armistice agreement with Jordan. See Tekoah to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations, TNWA247, 28 March 1957, 93.01/2186/3.
3. See no. 562, note 1.

582. Y. Meroz (Washington) to the Director of the United States Division. 28 March 1957

Copy: 130.23/3088/3

Summary

Meroz reports on a talk Shiloah had with Rountree in preparation for Richards' visit to the Middle East. Rountree gave a review of the main points of the Eisenhower Doctrine on the Middle East, and its application for each country in the region.

Shiloah commented that he did not receive any answer to the question of what the United States expects of Israel in the framework of the doctrine and Richards' visit. What will the practical manifestation of the cooperation be, if it is agreed upon, and will there be an umbrella organisation that will comprise all those countries with which the United States will achieve a bilateral agreement? Rountree replied that the main thing required is a statement of policy, i.e., a public reiteration of shared views which will serve as a basis for partnership in the future. As for setting up an overall organisation, at the moment there is no such intention.

Shiloah asked if there is a regional plan according to which each country will be assigned certain functions. Is all that is required of Israel at this point an expression of shared views, or perhaps there is some intention for more practical and specific planning? Rountree replied that Richards will not be bringing with him any plan for military cooperation, and confirmed that his mission at this stage is not accompanied by any tangible objective other than enlisting the governments in question to formulate and express their shared views, based on mutual discussions.

Shiloah raised the issue of Dulles' reference to the International Court of Justice in The Hague in his press conference,[3] and said that under the present circumstances the public may be getting the impression that the United States is not promoting the implementation of the principle of free navigation.[4]

Rountree commented that the U.S. position is perfectly clear, as reflected in statements by the secretary of state and Lodge[5] and in the aide mémoire of 11 February, and neither the State Department nor the U.S. government have any intention of encouraging an application to the International Court.

Towards the conclusion of the conversation Shiloah asked what is known so far about Hammarskjöld's mission. Rountree replied that the secretary-general has only just returned and his report is not yet available.

In response to Shiloah's request to expedite the handling of the grant,[6] he expressed his hope that the matter would be settled very fast.

The talk ended with a firm demand on Shiloah's part to receive an official response to the proposals submitted to Herter[7] after explicit recommendations made by the secretary of state to the minister of foreign affairs to submit such proposals. Rountree said he would look into the matter and let him know.

Notes

1. See Meroz to Herzog, WIA349, 28 March 1957, 93.01/2186/2.
2. See nos. 336, 392.
3. In a press conference on 26 March Dulles said that the United States was considering the possibility of asking the International Court of Justice in The Hague, via the United Nations, to rule whether Egypt can exercise belligerency rights in the Straits of Tiran.
4. On 27 March a statement of the spokesman of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs was published, saying that in the view of the Israeli government there was no need for an opinion of the International Court of Justice (see Rosenne to the minister of foreign affairs, legal opinion no. 13/57, 29 March 1957, 130.23/3086/6).
5. In his speech in the General Assembly on 1 March 1957.
6. Israel was concerned that at this stage, after all the technical steps for approving the grant had been completed, the United States was stalling implementation in order to use the grant and the lifting of the prohibition on American citizens travelling to Israel as leverage to pressure Israel into accepting any proposals made by Hammarskjöld following his talks with Nasser (see the United States division to the Israel embassy in Washington, IWA956, 21 March 1957, 130.02/2459/13).
7. See no. 569.

583. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and E. Najar. 28 March 1957

Coded Tel. 938; Outg.: 72.2/915/30

Summary

Tsur reports on Pineau's speech at the National Assembly on 27 March.

1) At Israel's suggestion, Pineau added the following points to his speech:
   No mention was made at any point during negotiations in Washington of stationing a U.N. force on the Israeli side of the Armistice Demarcation Lines, nor was the possibility discussed.
   A plan for a pipeline from Eilat to Haifa is being developed, and the French government will give it its full support.
   He denied the existence of a military pact.
2) Not only did Israel's affairs occupy a central place in Pineau's speech, but in conclusion, when he enumerated the constants in French foreign policy, he stressed three points: friendship with the United States; loyalty to the United Nations, provided that some changes are made in its structure, and friendship with Israel.
3) Pineau received applause when he spoke of the need to look into Egypt's belligerency rights and the contradiction between demanding such rights and relying on the armistice agreement. Assent was also heard from both Right and Left when he said that Israel has the right to change its mind if matters deteriorate, and that France would not join in any sanctions and would continue to help in seeking a just solution.
4) Israel's right to self defence based on Article 51 of the U.N. Charter was clearly emphasised several times throughout the speech.

Note

1. For a detailed account of Pineau's address to the National Assembly of 27 March, see the letter of the director of the West European division to the minister of foreign affairs, 1 April 1957, 130.02/4330/7. See also no. 563, note 5.
   Mollet, too, stressed France's commitment to Israel in his address to the National Assembly that same day, and declared that France would support Israel's right to respond with force to Egyptian aggression in the Gulf of Aqaba or in the Gaza Strip (see the Israel embassy in Paris to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel. 939, 29 March 1957, 130.09/2347/4).

584. E. Sasson (Rome) to the West European Division and the Economic Division. 28 March 1957

Coded Tel. 326; Inc.: 130.09/2358/1

Summary

Sasson reports on an unpleasant talk he had with the Italian ambassador to Israel, Capomazza, concerning the claims of the Italian oil company E.N.I.[1] Capomazza accused Israel of employing subterfuge to drag out the matter, to avoid recognition of the company's claims and to refrain from paying compensation. He argued that such conduct is detrimental to relations between the two countries and causes E.N.I. to enlist help in circles hostile to Israel in the Christian Democratic party and among government officials and the business sector. He believes Israel will be making a big mistake if it proposes to E.N.I. to participate in the oil pipeline before complying with its request and negotiating about paying damages. In addition, he thinks that current political circumstances in the Middle East are not such as would encourage Italy to take any part whatsoever in the pipeline. He suggests that Israel embark on talks with Italy only after it has begun negotiations with E.N.I. on paying damages, after two other European countries give their consent and after the United States gives its blessing to the venture.

Capomazza asked Sasson to obtain approval from Israel to schedule a date to begin negotiations with E.N.I. in Rome, so that he can attempt to reverse the atmosphere of ill will created, according to him, in government circles in Rome and in the Foreign Office in particular.

Note

1. See oral message from the embassy of Italy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, detailing the demands made by E.N.I. from the Israeli government, 14 March 1957, 93.19/278/11. See also no. 202.

585. Israel Embassy in Washington to J. Herzog (Jerusalem) and M. Kidron (New York). 29 March 1957

Coded Tel. WNT252; Inc.: 130.09/2312/2

Summary

The embassy reports on Rountree's talk with Shiloah, which was initiated by Rountree and also attended by Wilkins, Bergus and Meroz.

Rountree told them about the reports received from the U.N. secretary-general, and on several issues the results were fairly encouraging.

Gaza

Egypt has pledged that its army would not enter the Strip. The secretary-general gained the impression that Egypt would act to prevent hostilities and would cooperate with UNEF. Though there is a "weighty degree of Egyptian presence" in Gaza, which is not what the U.S. had hoped, its scope is not worrying at this point.

Aqaba

The talks on this topic were general. There was no indication that Egypt intends to order UNEF to leave nor that it intends to return to Sharm el-Sheikh. The secretary-general was under the impression that Egypt has accepted that UNEF would stay there indefinitely. At this point Rountree added that there was discussion with the British in Bermuda[1] about freedom of navigation, and it seems that there is total similarity between the content of their positions even if not in their wording. The idea of applying to The Hague for a legal opinion was also discussed, but no decision was taken and, as he had already mentioned,[2] the United States does not plan to encourage any application to the Court.

Suez Canal

Egypt's stance is not acceptable since it is not based on the Six Principles[4] and does not leave room for organised international cooperation. The United States will respond soon, emphasising and insisting on those principles. Rountree stated the "extreme desirability" of continuing the negotiations and urged Israel not to send a ship as a test case.

Belligerency rights

In reply to Shiloah's question, Rountree said that the secretary-general has written to Egypt[5] and has yet to receive an answer, which he is expecting.

Shiloah said he would convey all the above, and meanwhile gave a preliminary reaction in which he criticised the satisfaction implicit in Rountree's report and refuted the so-called "achievements." He said that Israel does not mean to take any precipitate action, so long as it is convinced that the United States is truly continuing its efforts on Israel's behalf, with Israel's best interests in mind. He asked whether

the United States still stands for freedom of navigation in the Canal, and Rountree replied in the affirmative.

At the end of the conversation Shiloah once again asked for a response to the proposals Eban submitted to Herter,[4] and Rountree promised to see to it promptly.

Notes

1. See no. 454, note 8.
2. See no. 582.
3. Egypt's memorandum on the operation of the Suez Canal after its reopening was published in the *New York Times* of 29 March.
4. See no. 569.

586. M. Comay (Ottawa) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 29 March 1957

Coded Tel. 363; Inc.: 130.09/2287/3

Summary

Comay gives an account of a talk with Pearson upon the latter's return from the Advisory Committee meeting and from talks with the U.N. secretary-general in New York. Robinson was also present.

The secretary-general's impression was that Nasser is quiet but firm in his stand. There were some very tense discussions, in which — Pearson said — the secretary-general held his ground.

The Straits

So far there is no change in the situation and Nasser has made no attempt to oust UNEF or shown any intent to disrupt navigation. The secretary-general and Pearson are of the opinion that commercial vessels should continue sailing without publicity, avoiding any provocative or demonstrative measures which could provoke Nasser to react.

Canada has no intention of taking any initiative to submit the matter to the International Court in The Hague. However, Pearson did remind those present that Dulles seems to think that it is a good idea to have the Court rule on the subject and thus put the matter to rest once and for all.[2]

Gaza

The secretary-general's report is far more encouraging than they expected. Burns is working on arrangements with the Egyptian authorities, but details have not yet been finalised. Burns believes these arrangements would make it possible for

UNEF to prevent Fedaiyun activity, providing that the Egyptian administration cooperates.

During the conversation Pearson also touched upon several other subjects, such as the possibility of operating within the Strip in conjunction with the local police; holding a strip along the border; UNEF maintaining control of the airport; port rights; maintaining headquarters in Gaza and transferring the UNEF base from Egypt to Rafah.

The secretary-general insisted that stationing UNEF troops on the Israeli side also is mandatory for maintaining the forces along the border. Pearson agrees with him, and once again asks that the Israeli government reconsider its stand on this matter. Details would be worked out in negotiations, and a token unit would suffice. Comay forcefully repeated Israel's objection, to which Pearson responded that he understands the sensitivity of the issue and public opinion concerning it, but nonetheless believes strongly that this is the key to the situation.

Comay called attention to the issue of belligerency as the key issue. At this point Pearson did not have any clear impression from the secretary-general's report, but assumes that Eban will find out more details.

Towards the end of the conversation Comay spoke sceptically of the secretary-general's so-called achievements in Cairo, saying that the whole thing reeks of appeasing Nasser, who is currently cooperating with regard to UNEF because it suits him, until he feels stronger. Israel has already learnt from experience not to put its faith in the secretary-general's interpretations of Nasser's intentions. Pearson replied that he is less pessimistic, and in any case one should give it a try.

Notes

1. Nasser's chief political adviser.
2. See no. 582, note 3.
3. Arthur Lall, permanent representative of India at the United Nations.

587. M. Kidron (New York) to J. Herzog (Jerusalem) and R. Shiloah (Washington). 30 March 1957

Coded Tel. NWTA352; Outg.: 93.01/2186/3

Summary

Kidron summarises his talk with Engen:

The Suez Canal.[1] With regard to the passage of Israeli ships through the Canal, Engen is convinced that it will happen much sooner than Kidron thinks and even

before Nasser declares that there is no belligerency status between Egypt and Israel.[2] As for bringing the matter before the Court in The Hague, Norway's view is that Egypt's legal argument has no basis.

Gaza. The view held by the Norwegian government, the other Scandinavian countries and Canada is that Burns' plan[3] is reasonable, and assuming that both parties cooperate, it can bring about the cessation of Fedaiyun infiltration. The success of the plan depends on true cooperation on Egypt's part, and so far Egypt is indeed cooperating.[4] It should also be kept in mind that there are 3,000 UNEF troops in the Strip, and nothing can happen there without their knowing of it immediately.

The Scandinavian countries which have troops in UNEF do not accept Israel's reasons against having UNEF troops on its territory. This would not be a case of stationing UNEF there, but merely having the right to operate within a limited security zone inside Israel, carrying out the police function of preventing infiltration and penetration.

In the session of the Advisory Committee it was proposed to ask Israel in writing to let UNEF carry out its duties on its territory based on the above guidelines. No decision has yet been taken on the matter.

Engen thinks that the Gaza problem cannot be solved without first solving the refugee problem. Reports coming in from the Norwegian unit describing the situation of the refugees highlight the severity of the problem.

Belligerency rights. Engen revealed that he had been asked by his government why Israel is so insistent about the issue of belligerency. Norway does not trust Nasser at all, and he assumes that Israel's assessment of him is the same. If so, what value can there be to any declaration of non-belligerency made by Nasser? In Engen's opinion, it would be far more beneficial to reach the same objectives by practical rrangements, such as Burns' plan for the prevention of infiltration from Gaza which would in fact eliminate belligerency in this area.

Notes

1. The paragraph omitted here deals with Egypt's proposal for operating the Suez Canal after it re-opened for shipping and the expected responses of users of the Canal.
2. However on 30 March Nasser declared that Israel's right to navigate the Suez Canal was linked to a solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees.
3. The plan submitted by Burns to Hammarskjöld dealt with measures to prevent Fedaiyun operations and military raids from the Gaza Strip, and its main point was stationing UNEF troops all along the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel and creating a security zone (see Kidron to Herzog, NWTN351, 29 March 1957, 93.01/2186/3).
4. Hammarskjöld claimed that the Burns plan had been sent to Cairo and that Nasser accepted its proposals and conclusions.

588. M. Alon (Ankara) to the West European Division. 31 March 1957

Orig.: 130.23/3125/6

Summary

Alon reports on a talk with Semih Günver, deputy director of the department of international economic affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Günver told Alon that the Egyptian representative in Ankara had approached the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the close ties between Turkey and Israel, and particularly about the strengthening of trade relations between the two countries. The Egyptian official quoted statistical data on Turkey's trade relations with Israel at a time when trade with Arab countries and with Arab countries has been reduced.

Günver replied that the statistical data and the type of goods that Turkey gets from Israel demonstrate how important this source of imports is to Turkey, and the role of Israel as a natural market for Turkey's export of agricultural produce. He asked whether Egypt or any other Arab country could supply Turkey with industrial finished products and raw materials of the type Israel is providing it.

In conclusion, Günver stressed the importance of economic ties between the two countries, ties which would lead to the improvement of relations between them, and proposed to act along those lines. The composition of Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs speaks volumes about the significance Turkey attaches to economic factors.

Note

1. The letter was not found.

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Abbreviations:
n. – note

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